

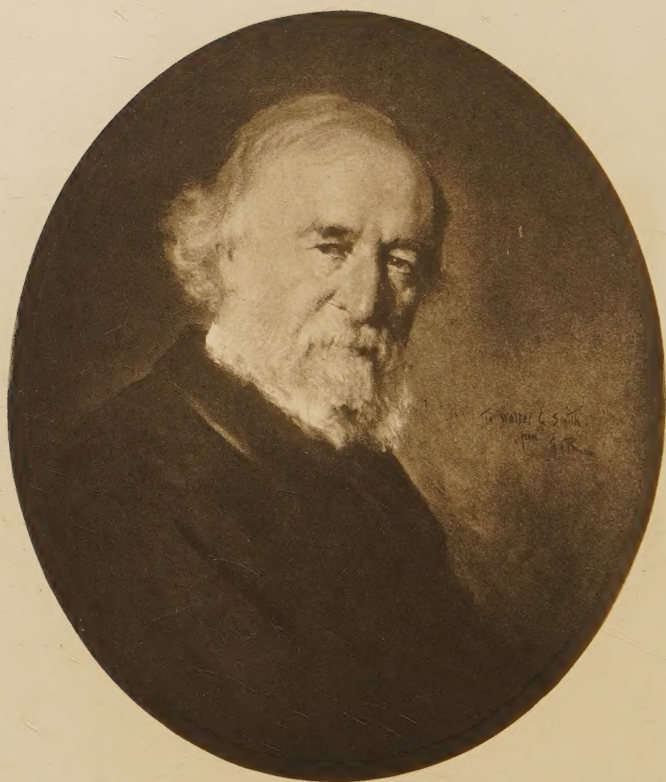
THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
WALTER CHALMERS SMITH

THE HISTORY OF THE
WARRIOR CHILDREN OF THE
NORTH



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George Macaulay
Walter L. Smith

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
WALTER C. SMITH
D.D., LL.D.

COLLECTED EDITION
REVISED BY THE AUTHOR



*WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT FROM A PAINTING
BY SIR GEORGE REID, P.R.S.A.*

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE various books, here gathered into one volume, appeared at different periods during the last forty-five years, with the exception of the portion of it which I have called "Ballads from Scottish History," which were the occupation or the amusement of the enforced leisure of old age. Though some of these books went to a third, and one a fourth edition I think, yet latterly they had fallen out of print, and I had quite made up my mind that they had served their turn, and must drop into oblivion like so many other human productions. On the whole, I was also fairly content that they should do so.

Some months ago, however, a number of friends approached me with a proposal that they should be collected and republished as they now are. They were gentlemen whose opinion had weight, for they were themselves more or less directly connected with literature. Yet it was with great reluctance that I consented to their request. I had not read any of those little books for a long time, and when I did so, with the view of determining what I ought to do in the matter, I came to the conclusion that while they represent fairly well the varying shades of thought and feeling during the latter part of the nineteenth century, I found so much to blot, and so much to correct, that I shrank from the labour it would involve, even while I felt that there was some fairly good work in them which might possibly repay the labour. At first, therefore, I declined to do as my friends wished. But I need not go into details. They were not to be refused, and undertook to relieve me of all the work that could be done for me. Of course they won the

day, for I suppose in my secret heart I half wished them to win it.

The "Ballads from Scottish History" are the only new portion of the book. They had grown up lately since I was laid aside by age and ill-health, and I hoped that they might help to float the book, and ease the mind of the publishers who have been bold enough to undertake its production. I sincerely hope this may prove true.

I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Oliphant Smeaton for the great help he has so kindly given me, and also to Messrs. Macmillan and Maclehose for permission to print what they had an interest in.

WALTER C. SMITH.

ORWELL COTTAGE, DUNELANE,
October 1902.

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<i>Dr. Lorne</i>	Uncle to Ina
<i>Bennett</i>	Lawyer
<i>Duffus</i>	Factor
<i>Kenneth</i>	A poor Student
<i>Chundra</i>	Servant to Dr. Lorne

Ministers, "Men," Crofters, etc.

<i>Lady MacAlpine</i>	Mother of Sir Diarmid
<i>Ina Lorne</i>	Minister's Daughter
<i>Doris Cattanach</i>	A Highland Proprietress
<i>Mairi Cattanach</i>	Her Cousin
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THE BISHOP'S WALK

AND

THE BISHOP'S TIMES

DEDICATION TO JOHN HUNTER, Esq.

CRAIGCROOK

My friend, I bring this little offering
To thee, assured, how small soe'er its worth,
That for the love which prompts me thou
wilt love it,
And with thy love wilt make it beautiful.

How oft among thy flower-beds we have
held

Free converse, where the budding yellow
rose,

Prolific of its gifts the long year through,
Breaks into beauty, or the myrtle rare

With orient perfume scents the nimble
breeze;

Now in the Spring, when faint-sweet
violets

Peep with their dim eyes, coy, amid the
leaves,

Breathing forth raptures; in the Autumn
now,

When the red creeper flushes all the house,
Save where the ivy clasps around the
tower,

Or trails, with wandering shoots, about
the eaves

And gargoyles grim, fantastic,—fearless
homes

Held by old swallows on a lease of love
Unbroken, immemorial. And at times,

When Summer rain pattered upon the
leaves,

In the green cloisters of the ivy-walk
We mused, with ample range of large
discourse;—

Of science broadening from phenomena
Diverse, to the great Unity which is God;

Of forces correlate, forecasting dim

Presages of a new philosophy;
Of history made meaningless, alas!
And lacking human interest, for lack
Of its diviner import, waiting still
The Epic soul. And ever with our speech
Mingled the interval of silent thought,
Not without reason, and the blithesome
ring

Of cheery laughter, which had reason too,
And nimble wit and repartee, and apt
Quotation from the poets who have sung
Unchanging wisdom to a changeful world.
Then, by and by, along the breezy heights
And lichened crags orange and grey and
brown,

We strolled, where mountain ash and
sombre pine

Crest with their various plumage thy loved
hill;

Whence looking we could spy the far-off
May

Dim in the sea, the Lomonds' shadowy
heights

Crowning the winding shores of kingly
Fife,

North Berwick Law, the grey sea-withered
scalp

Of Bass (where the wild sea-mew wings
amidst

Heroic memories of a nation's sorrow
Still haunting there), and nearer Arthur
Seat

Shouldering the dingy surge of mist and
smoke

From his great flanks, while the old Castle
looms

Darkly above the city roofs and spires,

And pillared Calton veils amid the dusk
His monumental forms, and at our feet
Nestles among the chestnuts and the elms
Jeffrey's green turret and thy happy home.
So as we walked amid the beautiful,
And shaped our speech about the beautiful
In art or nature, evermore we found,
Though years of ripened wisdom lay between us,

And varied rich experience, rare agreement
And vision eye to eye; like instruments
Of diverse form and substance which record
An unexpected harmony, each to other
Filling the chord, to make a perfect strain.
And when the Winter early closed the day,
And the log crackled, and the lamp was lit,
And the long wind howled through the groaning trees,
And the great arm-chair to the fireside drawn

Allured to mild repose, which yet the glass

Of golden sack, or generous claret purpling

The quaint old flask of Venice-work, forbade

To become vacant idleness; then we
Held high discourse of God and Destiny,
And the dear Christ of human love and hope

Gathering the weary wandering ages round
The throne which was a cross, and conquering

By His meek passion; till Theology
Striped off its sorrowful garb again, and grew

An impotent scholastic. Or at times
We talked of those whose songs had charmed our youth;

Who of them were forgot, and who were still

Daily companions, faring on the road
With us, and with a deeper meaning speaking

Unto our deepening wants: Of Wordsworth doing

A tuneful ministry of love to all
God's common creatures, till the hedges grow sung

With choiring seraphim at cottage doors;
Of Coleridge dreaming, and discoursing words

Mystic and musical—formative fire-mist
Luminous, with a star or two in it,

Deeper in heaven than any star we know,
And sweeping over vaster breadths of space:

Of Keats, whose senses were a kind of soul,

Living at every point of his fine frame,
And clothing subtlest thought in imagery
Tinted and perfumed and melodious:

Of Shelley, with the skylark singing, soaring,

And now in cloud invisible, and now
Without a cloud invisible, but still
Throbbing with passionate music, when the sense

Gurgled but half articulate: Of Hunt,
Playing with lambent lightnings innocent
About life's surface, cheerily singing, genial

And very human, and yet now and then
Unconscious, childlike, lifting up the veil,
And glancing at the holiest with wonder—
Soon lost among the pictures and the pathos

Of our familiar life: of Tennyson,
Dropping so calmly down a quiet stream—
A witch'd river, yet an English stream—
'Mong the broad lilies, and the whispering sedges,

Musing and singing, noting thoughtfully
The passionate throbblings of a troubled heart,

And passionate struggles of a wondrous age.

These all we canvassed, having sympathies
With all. Nor lacked discourse of nobler still—

Of people's Epic, and the learned muse
Of Milton; of the tragic sock, and eke
Of tragic symbol, tracking through the maze

Of sorrow and temptation the footprints
Mingled of God and man. So Goethe sang
His Faust; and so in Runic strain, unmeasured,

Guttural, yet with rarest tones of beauty,
Wailing the broken idols and the shrines
Even while he hurls them down, our modern Titan

Essays his vision of life's mystery.

Thus having shared thy fellowship, and heard

Manifest wisdom, truth profound, and pure

Utterance of taste; which I delightedly
Recall and treasure, and delightedly

Look forward to, making a threefold joy
Of hope and memory and present gladness,
I, grateful, bring mine offering to thee,
Assured thy love will scan it lovingly.

THE BISHOP'S WALK

PART I

THE CATHEDRAL TOWN

I

A GRAY old Minster on the height
Towers o'er the trees and in the light ;
A gray old town along the ridge
Slopes, winding downward to the
bridge—

A quaint, old, gabled place,
With Church writ on its face.

2

The quiet Close, secluded, dim,
The lettered scroll, the pillar slim,
The armorial bearings on the wall,
The very air you breathe, are all
Full of Church memories,
And the old sanctities.

3

And beautiful the gray old place
With characters of antique grace,
That tell the tale of pious work
Beneath the spire and round the kirk,
And growth of Law and Right
Where Christ had come with
light.

4

Begrimed with smoke, a monotone
Of equal streets in brick or stone,

I

With squalid lane, and flaunting
Hall,
Infrequent spire, and chimneys tall ;—
You know the place wherein
The weary toil and spin.

5

With jalousie and portico,
And oriel large, where sea-winds
blow,
And light parade, and ample streets,
Where idler with the idler meets ;—
You know the haunt of plea-
sure,
Or sick resort of leisure.

6

Far otherwise the old church town,
With the gray minster for its
crown :
Its tide of work has ebbed away ;
Its pleasuring was never gay ;
Yet there the morning broke,
And the new world awoke.

7

And it is well, amid the whirl
Of restless wheels and busy stir,
To find a quiet spot where live
Fond pious thoughts conservative,
That ring to an old chime,
And bear the moss of time.

8

Like ivy clasping ruin gray,
 And greenly clothing its decay ;
 Like garden haunted to this hour
 With smell of some old-fashioned
 flower ;
 So sweet the dim old town
 Still with its minster crown.

9

There is a strange philosophy
 Among the wondrous things that be :
 Even that the path which man has
 trod
 Progresses still away from God,
 And that we flourish most
 As piety is lost ;

10

As sacred turns to secular,
 As worship wanes, and temples are
 Unvisited and voiceless grown,
 And only rigid law is known :
 Even so, they say, do we
 Work out our destiny.

11

Alas ! and must the deep, divine
 Impress of God, and the grand line
 Of our high parentage be lost,
 To reach the meagre winning-post
 Of modern social saw,
 Or hard mechanic law ?

12

Nay, but in this quaint place I see
 The nobler thought of history ;
 The birth of civil right and peace,
 And progress that shall never cease,
 Amid the chaunt and hymn
 In cloistered alley dim.

13

And sweeter far and grander too
 The ancient civilisation grew,
 With holy war and busy work
 Beneath the spire and round the kirk,
 Than miles of brick and stone
 In godless monotone.

14

For here, in wild and lawless days,
 The Culdee waked a song of praise
 For Gospel light and liberty,
 And help of man's great misery ;
 And Darkness from its throne
 Fled at the Cross alone.

15

So was it then—so is it now,
 And will for ever be, I trow :
 The only spell of might is He,
 The watchword and the victory ;
 And thou shalt suffer loss,
 But conquer in the Cross.

16

Back rolls the Darkness, as they
 come,
 The victor griefs of Christendom ;
 Omnipotent sorrows only heal
 The evils of the commonweal ;
 And dim and ever dimmer
 All other lights shall glimmer.

17

The good monk had his working day,
 The good priest also passed away,
 The mitre faded, and the crook,
 And chaunted hymn, and lettered
 book ;
 But in this quiet place
 They left a natural grace.

18

A quaint old place—a minster gray,
 And gray old town that winds away,
 Through gardens, down the sloping
 ridge
 To river's brim and ancient bridge,
 Where the still waters flow
 To the deep pool below.

PART II

THE WALK

19

Where looks the western window far
 Unto the liquid evening star,
 And can Benledi dimly view,
 And the gray mists on Benvenue,
 And long brown uplands, felt
 In distant air to melt;

20

There where the green ash interweaves
 Irregular branch and slender leaves,
 For umbrage soft—a pale green shade
 With broken sunlights in the glade,
 There lies a pleasant way
 In gloaming all the day.

21

And far below the waters clear
 Murmur their presence on the ear,
 Scarce seen for dipping boughs that seek
 The light, or only when a streak
 Of sunshine cometh home
 Upon the crisp white foam.

22

A pleasant walk, when singing bird,
 Upon the bending twig is heard,

And rustling leaf that bids you hush !
 And hear the slow still waters gush
 Incessant and unseen,
 Beneath the branches green.

23

A pleasant path at noonday bright,
 With arching boughs to screen the
 light;
 A pleasant walk at close of day,
 With red lights glancing on the
 way,
 And golden showers that fall
 On the old churchyard wall.

24

Here swell the Ochils green; and
 there
 The Cromlech heaths are brown and
 bare;
 Benledi and Benlomond far
 Front the rude crags of U-am-var;
 And by the shady way
 Still towers the minster gray.

25

The many-pillared western gate
 With rounded arch elaborate,
 But weather-worn, you partly see :—
 A net-work of fine tracery;
 A cunning antique lace
 Draping a vacant space.

26

And high above the churchyard
 wall
 Springs the light western window
 tall,
 And be it window, be it niche,
 An almond form with carving rich,
 Set on the gable high,
 Looks like a watchful eye.

27

And in the roofless nave you see
 Lofty light-pillared gallery
 In vista long, and windows still
 Of lances clasped with simple skill,
 And fern and lichen doing
 Their work of graceful ruin.

28

Nor gargoyle lacks, grotesque and
 quaint,
 Nor saintly niche without its saint,
 Nor buttress lightsome, nor the tower
 Where the bell marks the passing hour,
 And peals out with our mirth,
 And tolls our earth to earth.

29

And o'er the dim old centuries
 The minster bridges, unto these
 Dull times of toil and commonplace,
 From days of chivalry and grace,
 Spanning the vague abyss
 With memories of bliss.

30

Oft Leighton's subtle fancy sped
 Far back unto its youth, and read,
 In sculptured forms and texts and
 rhymes,
 The secret of the ancient times,
 And their divinest sense
 Of mystic reverence.

31

And in its Cross the Christ he saw ;
 And in its pillars stedfast law ;
 Its dim light bade with awe admire ;
 And thought soared heavenward on
 the spire,
 Urged onwards by the chime
 That told the fleeting time.

PART III

THE BISHOP

32

Two hundred years have come and
 gone,
 Since that fine spirit mused alone
 On the dim walk, with faint green shade
 By the light-quivering ash-leaves made,
 And saw the sun go down
 Beyond the mountains brown.

33

Slow-pacing, with a lowly look,
 Or gazing on the lettered book
 Of Tauler, or a-Kempis, or
 Meek Herbert with his dulcimer,
 In quaintly pious vein
 Rehearsing a deep strain :

34

Or in the Gold-mouthed Greek he read
 High rhetoric, or what was said
 Of Augustine's experience,
 Or of the Gospel's grand defence
 Before assembled lords,
 In Luther's battle-words.

35

Slowly-pacing, with a downcast eye,
 Which yet, in rapt devotion high,
 Sometimes its great dark orb would lift,
 And pierced the veil, and caught the
 swift
 Glance of an angel's wing,
 Where of the Lamb they sing ;

36

And with the fine pale shadow, wrought
 Upon his cheek by years of thought,

And lines of weariness and strain,
That told of o'ertaxed heart and brain;
So went he to and fro
With step infirm and slow.

37

A frail, slight form—no temple he,
Grand, for abode of Deity;
Rather a bush, inflamed with grace,
And trembling in a desert place,
And unconsumed with fire,
Though burning high and higher:

38

A frail, slight form, and pale with
care,
Made paler by the raven hair
That folded from a forehead free,
Godlike of breadth and majesty—
A brow of thought supreme
And mystic glorious dream.

39

And over all that noble face
Lay somewhat of meek pensiveness
In a fine haze of subtle thought,
That seemed to waver light, and float
This way and that way still,
With no firm bent of will.

40

God made him beautiful, to be
Drawn to all beauty tenderly,
And conscious of all beauty, whether
In things of earth or heaven or neither;
So to rude men he seemed
Often as one that dreamed.

41

But true it was that, in his soul,
The needle pointed to the pole,

Yet trembled as it pointed, still
Touched with an awe unspeakable,
As it turned for the light
Unto the Infinite.

42

Beautiful spirit! fallen on days
When little was to love or praise;
Still seeking peace amid the strife,
Still working, weary of thy life,
Toiling in holy love,
Panting for heaven above:

43

I mark thee, in an evil day,
Alone upon a lonely way;
More sad-companionless thy fate,
Thy life more truly desolate,
Than even the misty glen
Of persecuted men.

44

For none so lone on earth as he
Whose way of thought is high and
free,
Beyond the mist, beyond the cloud,
Beyond the clamour of the crowd,
Moving, where Jesus trod,
In the lone walk with God.

PART IV

THE MEDITATION

45

So musing on the dim green way,
Beside the minster old and gray,
Beside the river murmuring slow
Far down the dipping boughs below,
As sunk the evening sun
Amid the shadows dun;

46

So musing to and fro he went,
 Dreaming of law and government,
 And civil broil, and discontent
 That struggled to have scope and vent,
 And of a nation sick
 Of crafty politick.

47

“Alas !” he said, “an evil time,
 When seeking truth is civil crime,
 And God’s anointed goes in quest
 Of foolish mirth and ribald jest ;
 And the high task of rule
 Falls or to knave or fool.

48

“A king that only cares for pleasure,
 A court that dances to his measure,
 A policy of passing shifts,
 A parliament that, thoughtless, drifts
 With any tide to-day
 On any evil way !

49

“And strange, alas ! the work they
 plan ;
 For, without faith in God or man,
 In human worth, or truth divine,
 Or holy priest, or sacred shrine,
 Or aught the wise revere,
 Or aught the lowly fear,

50

“They care not for thy kirk, O
 Lord,
 They reck not of thy blessed Word,
 Alike the mitre and the rood,
 Alike to them the cap and hood,
 Their only wish on earth
 To skim its froth of mirth :

51

“And yet they persecute and slay
 For mere opinion day by day ;
 As if they had a zeal for truth
 That stilled the pitiful voice of ruth,
 And bade them quench in death
 The enemies of faith.

52

“Ay me ! ay me ! I cannot tell
 How on such hapless times I fell,
 That they should cloak the wrong
 they do
 With my poor name, and call it too
 A work for God, a work
 For Christ and holy kirk.

53

“The wolf is ravening in the fold,
 The robber prowling there for gold,
 The wheat is trampled for the tares,
 The vineyard sown with hates and cares,
 Nor prayer nor psalm is heard,
 Nor ever healing word.

54

“The trooper with the curate swears,
 The curate calls it troopers’ prayers,
 And subtle craft and cruel deed
 Sow broadcast o’er the land a seed
 That shall be reaped in sorrow
 On many a dark to-morrow.

55

“And God’s dear saints, alas ! are
 dead,
 Or to the misty moorlands fled,
 Or, with oppression mad, they come
 To battle with the trump and drum,
 Soon trampled by the force
 Of the rider and his horse.

56

“And all for what? alas, the while!
Those deal in wrath, and hate, and
guile,
And these to madness yield them, all
For forms ecclesiastical;
And for the seed of grace
We but the husk embrace.

57

“Ay me! ay me! I seem to see
An angry God look down on me;
The fleece is dewy on the hills;
But dry and dewless now all else;
Nor reverence, nor fear,
Nor touch of grace is here.

58

“O weary time! O dreary age
Of mine unhappy pilgrimage!
A nation brooding discontent,
And Christ's fair garment soiled and
rent,
A king in folly sunk,
His lords in madness drunk!

59

“And I—alas! I was not meant
For tasks of crafty government
To moderate the angry stir
Of troubled kirk and presbyter,
And settle wordy jars
Of harsh polemic wars.

60

“I have no gift that way; I think
At good men's errors I would wink;
A good man's foible should be borne:
Yet shall I get but double scorn
From those the wrong that do,
And those that suffer too.

61

“Yet that were light, if I might serve
The blessed Christ, and never swerve;
Nor do I grudge the sacrifice
Of all that I esteem of price
To do Thy will, O Lord,
According to Thy Word.

62

“I care not for the weary care,
I heed not of the hate I share,
I would not murmur or complain
At cruel wrong or bitter pain;
For thou, O Lamb of God,
This way Thyself hast trod.

63

“But Lord, I pray Thee, send Thou
him
Whom Thou wilt send; mine eyes
are dim
For lack of faith and hope: and see
Thy work will suffer now in me;
For I am all alone,
Trusted and loved by none.

64

“Alone, like one untimely born,
And wandering through his age for-
lorn,
Too early he, or else too late,
His heritage a common hate,
By no one understood,
And impotent for good.

65

“The men I love my way deplore;
The men I loathe do hate me more;
With whom I live I have no ties;
With whom I left, sad memories;
With none have I the power
To help this evil hour.

66

"And doubtless all the blame is mine;
 Yet, Lord, let not the scaith be
 Thine;
 They love me not; and yet for them
 This dark and troubled tide I stem;
 And I could almost be
 Accursed for them and Thee.

67

"O weary heart! O hapless fate!
 O evil times of strife and hate!
 The raven finds a carcass there
 To settle on, but in the air
 The sad dove flutters, fain
 To seek the ark again.

68

"Lord, take me hence; what profit I
 In this great flood of misery?
 I am but tempted to repine
 At mine own doings, Lord, and Thine;
 I have no heart to live,
 Having no help to give.

69

"For lo! I have no power to heal
 The evils of the commonweal;
 I was beguiled to be the tool
 Of those who now hold sway and rule
 In this distracted land,
 They nowise understand.

70

"And now the people trust me not;
 How could they, when these rulers
 plot
 To crush their freedom, and discrown
 The only King the Church may own
 As Lord of conscience here,
 Whose right is sure and clear?

71

"This people will not be constrained
 Except by truth and love unfeigned;
 But give them doctrine undefiled,
 And you may lead them like a child
 That holds its father's hand,
 And feels that life is grand.

72

"I know them and their noble deeds,
 Which still are more than all their
 creeds;
 I know their patience to endure
 The evils which they may not cure,
 While they may go their way,
 And sing their psalms and pray.

73

"Set up for them a lofty aim,
 And they will put your soul to shame,
 By readiness to pay the price
 In suffering and sacrifice,
 That they the Lord may serve,
 Nor from His Law may swerve.

74

"I know them, but they know not
 me,
 And love them, but they will not see
 How I do yearn to do them good,
 And ponder on their wrongs and brood,
 Although my way is not
 Along their line of thought.

75

"I heed not much of forms; I thought
 'Twere well indeed if we were brought
 From our lax ways and hot debate,
 To primitive episcopate,
 And prayers lisped of old
 By infants in the fold.

76

"Yet reck I not of forms ; though well
I know the pearl gives to the shell
Some beauty and virtue like its own,
And shining hue and gorgeous tone ;
And the old forms to me
Gleam with old sanctity.

77

"Yet what boot they? And what
boots all
Our garb ecclesiastical,
The white-stoled priest, the altar high,
If we do err from charity?
O God, that reigns above,
Knit us with cords of love.

78

"I think there was a Church of Christ,
That this poor earth of ours rejoiced,
Ere Luther championed the high truth,
Or Calvin taught our eager youth
To leave the ancient ways,
Our guides in former days.

79

"Perhaps I err ; but such a break
With the old faith I could not make—
Such prayers I thought the saints had
breathed,
Such hymns apostles had bequeathed,
Such customs spake to me
Of Christ in Bethany.

80

"What, if the ages could espy
More truth than either you or I?
What, if their wants discovered gold,
And treasures rare and manifold,
Which do not often fall
To mere art logical?

81

"We are not single ; age with age
Is linked ; and truth's high heritage
Is the slow fruit of bended knees
Through the long growth of centuries ;
Nor is it yet complete,
Nor yet all counterfeit.

82

"Oh, I would purge the holy kirk
Of pagan form, and heathen work,
And idol carved, and idol hymn,
And also Hebrew Teraphim,
Which tinge our thoughts, I
fear,
More than doth well appear.

83

"Yet would I leave the altar high,
And the old chaunted melody,
The symbol cross above the wall,
The angel-crownèd capital,
And Bishop minister
To faithful presbyter.

84

"There surely was a Church of old,
With pious customs manifold,
That ruled the savage in the wild,
And brought him to the Lord a
child
And reared the structure high,
Of noblest chivalry.

85

"Christ was not buried in the tomb
All those long centuries of gloom ;
Nor did the ages drift ashore
Only loose waifs upon the hoar
Old billows, as they chime
God's doings through all time.

86

"Yet oh, I love not man's device
Of policy and statecraft nice ;
Nor would I plant what I love most,
Christ's very Gospel, at the cost
Of hate and blood which we
Bequeath to history.

87

"And I had been content to try
What Christ's flock wished for.
What care I
For priest or presbyter, or lawn
And mitre ? I am nowise drawn
By words and names and shows,
But what they do enclose.

88

"But men of crafty policy,
That neither love the land nor me,
Nor God, nor Christ, nor prayer, nor
praise,
Have dragged me on their evil ways,
And torn my heart from them
That love Jerusalem.

89

"Ay me ! ay me ! that I should be
The tool of this great perjury,
For Lauderdale and Middleton
And Sharpe to wreak their fury on
The pasture-sheep of Christ,
Inveigled and enticed !

90

"Oh that I were in still Douay,
Among the quiet priests that pray
In chapel low or chancel dim,
Chaunting the plain-song or the hymn,
Perchance the 'Stabat Mater,'
Perchance 'Veni Creator.'

91

"I may not bind me with their creed,
Though some of them are free indeed,
Or only thrall to heaven above ;
And oh they bind me by their love
Of Him whose name on earth
Is ointment poured forth.

92

"Nor can I say but vesper hymn,
Low-chaunted in the chapel dim,
Sounds to me as an infant's voice
When Faith is young, and doth rejoice,
And goeth all day long
Singing a quiet song :—

93

"A voice that lingers on mine ear
From bride, whose Bridegroom still
is near ;
In her mysterious mirthfulness,
And trembling joy, and wondering
grace,
A tender music sighing
Upon his bosom lying.

94

"But yet they wrong me much who say
That I have erred, and gone astray
From Christ, the Way, the Truth,
the Life,
Because I shrink from civil strife,
And schoolmen's quirks, and faint
Cobwebs of argument.

95

"I love the kirk, with ages hoar ;
I love old ways, but Christ far more ;
I love the fold, I love the flock,
But more my Shepherd and my Rock,
And the great Book of grace
That mirrors His dear face.

96

"O sweet the story and the psalm,
And prophecy is healing balm,
Like virgin-comb apostle's lips,
Like Heaven the grand Apocalypse;
But sweet above all other,
His words, our Saviour-Brother.

97

"Once my soul wandered; for I lent
Mine ears to faithless argument.
Yet not my heart erred, but my head,
For still my fainting spirit bled
To think that, day by day,
God seemed to fade away.

98

"I fain had clung to Thee, O Lord;
I fain had kept Thy holy Word;
I did not seek to 'scape from Thee,
But Thou didst fade away from me;
And all Thy glory seemed
A dream which men had
dreamed.

99

Dark thoughts were these—a weary
time;
Father, impute it not for crime,
That in his fever Thy poor child
Raved wildly in his fancies wild;
For still I found no rest
Save lying on Thy breast.

100

"Ay me! ay me! would I might be
In old Ulshaven by the sea,
To dream beside the dreamy wave,
And choose me out a quiet grave,
Where the long ocean chime
Tells the slow march of time.

101

"O just to seat me by the tide
Of life, and see its galleys glide,
With every sail on every yard,
And speculate their whitherward
Upon the shoreless sea,
Dim with man's destiny!

102

"To stand apart, and set my heart
Alone upon the better part,
And hear far off the idle din
Of evil tongues and bruit of sin,
And soar to Thee, O Lord,
High on Thy holy Word!

103

"I was not meant for action; I
Like wind-harp in the window sigh,
When breath of Heaven is passing
by;
But from a ruder finger fly
The long-drawn notes, and fall
Harsh and unmusical.

104

"Lord, place me where Thy breath
may be
Tremulous all day long on me;
So shalt Thou get my little worth,
So shall my use be to the earth;
For this is all of me—
A voice that cries to Thee.

105

I have no fight in me to stay
The rush and wrestle of the fray:
My father would have battle done,
And braved all, were he only one
Against an host, but then
He was a king of men.—

106

A warrior stout to hold the field
 With loving words for sword and shield,
 A Ruler, too, with resolute soul
 The people's humours to control ;
 But none of these did he
 Bequeath to strengthen me.

107

I have no help for this poor life
 Of controversial storm and strife,
 Nor skill to order the debate,
 So long maintained, of Church and
 State,
 I can but think and pray
 As I hold on my way.

108

What, if some men were never meant
 To serve their day, but be content
 Some day somewhere, when life is past,
 To have their use found out at last,
 And fruitful branches wave
 Above the quiet grave.

PART V

THE INCIDENT

109

Thus musing to and fro he went,
 Dreaming of kirk and government ;
 While cawing rooks were homeward
 winging,
 And bird on leafy bough was singing,
 And Allan far below
 Was rippling soft and slow ;

110

And kine stood listless in the stream
 Where the red lights of evening gleam,

And whispering winds were tripping
 free

Down the high pillared gallery,
 Or sighing as they pass
 Over the churchyard grass.

111

Still was the hour—the evening still :
 Peace slumbered on the distant hill ;
 Peace, dreaming, smiled upon the
 cloud ;
 And earth seemed whispering Peace !
 aloud,
 When any voice awoke
 And that deep silence broke.

112

And in the calm of such an hour
 Old memories have a witching power,
 Old times come back, old faces look
 Up to us from the unread book ;
 The very grave seems made
 To yield us back our dead.

113

So dreaming, there appeared to rise
 A certain form before his eyes,
 Personal, real ; and yet he knew
 'Twas but the mind's fine shadow
 grew
 From dimness into clearness,
 With a strange sense of nearness.

114

They had been friends, when friend-
 ship is
 A passion and a blessedness ;
 And in a tender sacrament
 Unto the house of God they went,
 And plighted love, caressing
 The same dear cup of blessing.

115

Their busy day was a delight ;
 Nor less the thoughtful studious night,
 With high discourse, and large debate,
 Unmixed by bitterness or hate—
 Their fellowship I ween,
 A pleasant thing had been.

116

He in Dalkeith, a guide of men,
 And he in near Newbattle then
 Pastured the flock of Christ ; and they
 Like children had made holiday,
 In old light-hearted times,
 Under the elms and limes.

117

But parted by unhappy fate
 In sorrow deep, disconsolate,
 One got the mitre—one the rod
 Of persecution for his God ;
 And both had suffered loss,
 Bearing a separate cross.

118

Alas ! if you look back and see
 Friendship's old picture-gallery,
 Where some are gone, and some are
 changed,
 And some embittered and estranged,
 And some you wronged, per-
 chance,
 Upbraid you with a glance,

119

A sadder strain you shall not find
 In all the measures of the mind,
 Than these remembered faces wake,
 When, silent as the falling flake,
 Ghostly and pale and dumb,
 In twilight dim they come.

120

O bitter grief ! O vain regret !
 O ye, if ye were living yet !
 O foolish youth, and cursèd pride,
 That kept me from a brother's side !
 What is there of such price
 Worth so great sacrifice ?

121

Seemed now at hand that friend of
 youth,
 Who had loved God, and man, and
 truth—
 He knew it but an empty shade,
 An image which the mind had made ;
 Yet shook with hope and fear,
 As if he might be near.

122

Then said the Bishop ? " Where is he ?
 In lettered Utrecht by the sea ?
 Among the wilds of Annandale ?
 Or where the Mayflower dropt her sail,
 And dusky savage flew
 Past in his light canoe ?

123

" No man of blood, or craft, or trick
 Of cunning art and politic,
 Or hare-brained dreamer fancy-sick,
 But full of thought, and calm and meek,
 A man of men wert thou
 Of the great eye and brow.

124

" And where art thou ? we need thee
 still :
 Thine own folk need thee on the hill
 For counsel and courage to meet their
 fate ;
 And thou art needed in the state—
 Oh for but one like thee
 To guide our destiny.

125

"But woe's me ! such as you are driven
To loathe the earth and long for
heaven ;
And well for you, aspiring thus ;
But ill for our poor world and us ;
Without the salt we rot,
Alas ! and heed it not."

126

Even as he spoke, one straggled
through
The wild-rose white with blossoms
new,
With tottering step, and panting breath,
And on his face the brand of death,
Pallid and pinched and dim ;
And stood confronting him.

127

They gazed a moment face to face ;
He tall and with a stately grace ;
A thin gray man, with thin gray hair,
And worn with hunger, grief, and care ;
And the good Bishop shook,
As his lean hand he took.

128

"My brother ! O my brother !" More
He could not ; but the stranger wore
A gentle smile upon his face
That softened with a tender grace,
As the old years of love
Bent, beaming from above.

129

"I came to seek thee in my need,
Robert, as to a friend indeed ;
And come too late ; yet that is well
For me, I think ; for who can tell
What a weak heart may do
For life, and live to rue ?

130

"For days I have been hunted still,
From heath to heath, from hill to hill,
No time to sleep, no time to eat,
No pause for my unresting feet,
And weary now and faint,
My feeble life is spent.

131

"Yet if I might have chosen where
My death should hap, it had been there,
Where thou could'st speed me on my
flight,
And trim my lamp for gathering night ;
Though I have wished to be
A twilight hour with thee.

132

"No matter—all is well ; thou art
Still mine old friend, still in my heart ;
My journey ended, home is near ;
And, as we part, the lights appear,
Flashing from sapphire floor
Through heaven's open door.

133

"And grieve not, Robert ; would'st
thou weep
To see the sick child drop asleep,
Hushed on a mother's loving breast,
And gently sobbing into rest ;
Now from all sorrow free,
Pain and anxiety ?

134

"And all is well ; and we are well ;
And thou wilt toll the passing bell
For a poor brother, who hath run
A sorry race that now is done,
And with thine own hands lay
Me gently in the clay.

135

"That was our covenant; for you
 Promised beneath the dark old yew,
 Whose branches o'er my Mary wave,
 Whose shadow sweeps my children's
 grave,
 That dying before thee
 There thou would'st bury me.

136

"And, Robert, hear me ere I die;
 I know thy clear sincerity,
 Thine old love of the old Church ways,
 And the old ritual of praise,
 And that thy fancy still
 Dwelt pure amid the ill.

137

"I never doubted thee; when some
 Would have it thou wert almost come,
 In feebleness and false compliance,
 To seek with Rome a base alliance,
 I held their words but light,
 Knowing thy heart was right.

138

"Yet, Robert, hear me ere I die;
 The mitre sits uneasily
 Upon a lowly head like thine,
 Betrinking a gift divine;
 And there is blood below
 Its vain and empty show.

139

"Think, brother, of the crimes they
 do,
 And consecrate them all with you;
 Think of this poor afflicted realm,
 And all the sorrows that o'erwhelm
 The Lord's beloved sons,
 His dear redeemèd ones.

140

"You love the old Church primitive,
 In the old manner you would live,
 But yet I know that Christ is more
 To you than all your learned lore;
 Ah! be not joined with them
 That harm Jerusalem.

141

"Now speak to me; and speed me on;
 The night grows dark; I've been
 alone
 For weeks among the moorlands bare,
 Yet not alone, for Christ was there;
 Eerie they were and sad,
 But yet He made them glad.

142

"How dark it grows! Is Robert
 here?
 No matter, Lord, if thou art near;
 And yet I wist that he would say
 A kind word, ere I passed away,
 A word on which to die
 With a great hope peacefully.

143

"He used to go down with a soul
 Into the valley of death and dole
 Farther than any I ever knew;
 A convoy great and precious to
 Full many a troubled heart
 Sad from the earth to part.

144

"But, Lord, I think that I have fought
 A good fight, and Thou wilt allot
 To me, a frail yet faithful child,
 A crown unfading, undefiled,
 And that Thy dear 'well-done'
 Waits me beyond the sun."

145

Thus wandering, but right-hearted, he
Sank on his friend, and peacefully
Gave up his spirit unto God,
His body to the earth it trod ;
 Each turning to its source
When it had run its course.

146

And as he died, across his face,
That beamed with such a tender grace,
There passed a look of quiet, quaint,
And subtle humour, all too faint
 For any but an eye
Familiar, to espy.

147

But Leighton knew it long ago ;
And as he watched it flickering low,
Lightening the eyes as they grew
 dim,
It rent the very heart of him,
 To see that smile so quaint
Gleam from the dying saint.

148

As one that, in a lumber-room,
Cobwebbed, and left in dingy gloom,
Comes on a battered baby-doll,
With bitter anguish to his soul,
 (For we from pleasures borrow
The pathos of our sorrow),

149

So Leighton, as he watched the smile
Play on the dying lips a while :
Old times came back, old humours
 gave
A deeper pathos to the grave,
 A keener edge to grief
That now found no relief.

150

Never again, oh never more
Shall they hold speech of learned lore,
And saintly hymn, and pious work,
And hallowed love of holy kirk,
 And duty to be done
As these last ages run ;

151

Never again, oh never more
Together shall their thoughts explore
Far-reaching wisdom, deep, divine,
Hid in some mystic word or line,
 Nor probe the hidden part
Of man's deceitful heart ;

152

Never again, oh never more
Shall taste the joys they knew of yore,
The fellowship of love and truth,
The gaiety of hopeful youth,
 The glory of the time
That made their life sublime.

PART VI

BESIDE THE DEAD

153

Then cried the Bishop, kneeling by
The dead, as if himself would die,
In broken tones of wrath and grief
That struggled to obtain relief,
 And if they found not vent
Had burst their tenement :—

154

“O God—my God and his—how
long?
When shall this sorrow cease and
wrong?”

O pitiful Christ, who lovest all,
 Hope of the hopeless, shall we call
 Upon Thy name in vain
 To ease our cruel pain?

155

"Unhappy country! thou art left
 This day to mourn as one bereft
 Of wisdom, counsel, courage here,
 And antique faith, and lowly fear,
 And skill to guide the way
 In wild distracted day.

156

"Good men have fallen on either
 side—
 The Great Montrose in haughty
 pride,
 Keen Warriston, and deep Argyle,
 And Napier, sagest of our isle;
 And since the great are dead,
 Small men are great instead.

157

"But thou, my friend, wert brave and
 true,
 And had'st the scope of things in
 view;
 Equal to greatest times, and still
 Full of their good, free from their
 ill;
 Too good for faction, yet
 Driven to have part in it.

158

"In troubled times of kirk or
 state,
 Hurrying on change precipitate,
 God sent the peoples heretofore
 Of great and good men ample store,
 And still the wasteful strife
 Was charged with noble life.

2

159

"But we are fallen on days of dearth
 Of generous mind and manly worth;
 O all is little, mean, and bad,
 And growing dark and waste and sad;
 For thriftless too are we
 In our great poverty.

160

"There is no one to whom the eye
 Of all the land turns hopefully;
 But little men, with little shift,
 Do let the groaning kingdom drift,
 Through fickle change and
 chance,
 To insignificance.

161

"A noble land, once nobly led,
 By them who God's deep counsel
 read,
 Along a path of wisdom high
 And blended law and liberty;
 But now become a scorn,
 And helpless and forlorn!

162

"O Christ, to the oppressèd dear,
 Who in Thy bottle every tear,
 And every drop of blood and sweat,
 And every scorn, and word of hate,
 Keepst for evermore,
 Numbering o'er and o'er;

163

"O Thou who sittest on the throne,
 I know Thou wilt avenge Thine own;
 Thou seest not as mortals see,
 Thou lovest them that trust in Thee,
 And Thou wilt yet befriend
 Thy people and defend.

164

"But we have built a Babel tower,
Presumptuous, in an evil hour ;
Sorry foundation we have laid,
Who in the blood of saints have made
Altar, and priest, and shrine,
Hateful, O Lord, to Thine.

165

"A few short years—a few dark days—
Whose wrath shall yet work out Thy
praise,
And all our glory in the dust
Shall crumble, Lord, for Thou art just :
Who build upon the sand
Their fall is near at hand.

166

"But Thou upon Thy people look,
Whose names are written in Thy Book,
And who are standing in Thy sight
Robed in the garments clean and
white,—
And for salvation come
To Thy vexed Christendom !

167

"O King of glory—Lord of might,
Who hatest ill, and lovest right,
Although Thy ways in darkness be
And strangeness and perplexity,
Hear from the depths our cry,
Shine forth in majesty ;

168

"And look upon this land of ours,
And save it from unhallowed powers
Of darkness, that enthronèd be,
And establish foul iniquity,
Yet call it law divine,
And holy will of Thine.

169

"Oh, hear the fainting voice that cries
From earth, afflicted, to the skies ;
Helpless, the cause is now appealed
From desolate home and stricken field
To Thee, the Lord of might,
And Judge who doest right.

170

"Surely for some great destiny
This ancient land was led by Thee,
Through foreign war and civil strife,
To such a pitch of noble life,
With freedom for its crown,
And genius and renown.

171

"And thou, brave soldier of thy
Lord,
Sleep in the peace of his sure Word,
Sleep, for thy works have gone
before,
Sleep on, but not for evermore ;
For thou hast vanquished death
In victory of faith.

172

"Oh might I only go with thee !
I'm weary of this misery,
I'm weary of a hopeless task,
I'm weary of their pious mask,
That hides the deed of shame
With Christ's beloved name.

173

"To see the arts of government
And law unto oppression bent,
And lies, and cruelties, and slights,
Breed treason unto human rights,
And mockery of Him
Between the cherubim !

174

"Lord, take me hence, if it may be,
 Away from this, away to Thee;
 Where, in exulting angel strain,
 He now forgets all grief and pain,
 Lost in the love of Thee,
 To all eternity."

PART VII

THE CONCLUSION

175

Slow tolled the bell its mournful knell,
 As earth and stone on coffin fell—
 Still tolling slowly, while, meek and
 lowly,
 He read for the dead the scriptures
 holy,
 Where the dark yew sadly waves
 Over the household graves.

176

"Earth to earth, and dust to dust,
 We yield in certain hope and trust;
 Who sleep in Jesus—only sleep,
 Who sow corruption yet shall reap
 Pure incorruption, tried,
 Refined and glorified.

177

"Cometh ere long the trump of doom
 To dust and darkness of the tomb;
 Cometh the judgment, and the throne
 White, exalted; and thereon
 Sits the Lamb that died,
 For sinners crucified."

178

Mellow and low the words were spoken,
 With falling tear and accents broken,

For with the hope the sorrow strove,
 And sad sweet memories of love;
 As earth on coffin fell,
 And on his heart as well.

179

In old Newbattle 'mong the limes,
 Where they had walked in happier
 times,
 There now the friend of youth he laid
 Beside his loved ones, by his dead;
 Then turned him to the strife
 And weary task of life.

180

"Too long," he said, "have I, too
 long,
 Witnessed oppression, grieved for
 wrong,
 And played the coward to the truth,
 Even seeming false to human ruth,
 Although my heart was burning,
 And pity in me yearning:

181

"I have indulged me with the thought
 Of peace on earth, when peace was
 not,
 And made a dreamland for my soul,
 Where God's stern law held no
 control,
 Of fact or duty till
 Earth groaned with growing ill.

182

"Forgive me, Lord; Thou gavest
 me
 A warfare to be fought for Thee,
 And I the conflict high declined
 For vagrant fancies of the mind,
 And mine appointed lot
 Neglected and forgot.

183

"Vain wisdom his — presumptuous
sense,

Who will not take from Providence
The cup it mingles, but will go
In sparks of his own kindling. Lo !
The mighty age sweeps on ;
He eddies there alone.

184

"May no man leave the solid earth,
And call his dream a thing of worth ;
May no man lightly turn away
From strife or sorrow of his day :—
The godlike is to do
What God has laid to you.

185

"We have an hour allotted thus ;
We have a task appointed us ;
Nor culture of the mind and heart
Shall be the Christian's only part ;
But he shall bend his will
To present duty still.

186

"In life of others we do live,
And joy in all the joy we give ;
If mine own soul alone I cherish,
My soul shall in my brother perish ;
Living, alas ! I die ;
But dying live thereby.

187

"So let me gird my loins with
prayer,
And for the weary task prepare ;
Nor falter, irksome though it be,
Nor do the right despondingly :
I did not take the mitre
To make my labour lighter.

188

"Yea, I will hope, O Lord, in Thee
That faithful work shall fruitful be :
Tears, bitter tears, may fall like rain,
And shower upon the earth in vain ;
But the true work is never
A profitless endeavour.

189

"Perchance the fruit is not to-day,
For the quick growth hath quick decay ;
But we shall sow and others reap,
And they shall joy though we did
weep ;
Yet in the harvest shall
Be gladness unto all.

190

"Then, what if my small seed should
be
Reaped in another century,
And understood, and loved by them
Who then, in our Jerusalem,
Shall peacefully combine
To love the life divine ?

191

"What if my little light now lost
In our wild turmoil, tempest-tossed,
Should gleam upon another age,
And beacon, on their pilgrimage
Of hope and blessing, some
Who unto Christ would come ?

192

"What if the shadow I project
Upon the clouds that now deject
Our weary times, seen far away
By kindlier eyes some distant day,
Should lead them to be just
When I am in the dust ?

193

“Or what, if, to rebuke my vain
And foolish thoughts, the Lord
maintain
Nothing of all I do or say,
But sweep the structure all away,
And me and my poor fate
Wisely obliterate?”

194

“Oh what am I, or aught I’ve done,
That I should ’scape oblivion?
That Death, when he dissolves this
frame,
Should spare my shadow and my name?
Lord, as the ages run,
Still let Thy will be done.”

195

“We would be something who are
nought;
And if we work where Thou hast
wrought,
The hodmen of Thy temple, we
Would hand our name to history,
With the great architect
Who did it all erect.”

196

“O proud ambition to be known!
Envious that he should be alone.
Still on our little self we brood,
Still boastful of our little good,
Still panting for a name
On crumbling niche of fame.”

197

“Work all intent, while work ye may;
Work now while it is called to-day;

Strive for the duty to be fit,
Then toil with might to perfect it;
Think not what thou hast done,
Think of thy task alone.”

198

“Enough, if such poor work as
thine
Hath place at all in His design;
Enough in Temple grand, divine,
To hew a stone, or hold a line;
High honour thou hast got;
Rejoice and murmur not.”

199

“So let me sink to nothingness,
For I am nothing—I am less;
Nought have I, for I am in debt;
Nought would I, Lord, but to forget
My foolish self in thee
Unto Eternity.”

200

“And thou, my friend, farewell
again!
I weep no more, for tears are vain;
But, if from spheres of light thine
eye
Bend sometimes on our misery,
As often it hath seemed,
Or I have fondly dreamed;

201

“If eyes that look on glory ever
Can look upon our poor endeavour,
Me no more dreaming shalt thou
see—
Thy death hath given life to me,
And I have seen that duty
Is the most Holy Beauty.”

THE BISHOP'S TIMES

FROM THE BASS

THERE were three of us, when we took
the road,
To warn our folk that the hawks were
abroad.
And we met by chance in the market
place,
Under the gibbet we thought to grace,
Some day yet, with an honest face.
A black night, I remember me:
The wet wind roared in the creaking
tree,
Where the hoarse raven was hard
bestead
To balance himself on a dead man's
head,
Holding on with claw and beak,
And clapping his wings to the withered
cheek
Grimly at each sudden gust.
"Hist!" quoth my neighbour Irwine,
"Hist!"
To the hornet's nest in the castle rock:
They're stirring now. God help the
folk
On the Pentland Hills to-night!"

Quoth I,

At sunset I was hurrying by
St. Giles, when the courier, white
with spray
From the bit and flanks of his jaded bay,
Pulled up on his haunches sudden;
and forth
Rushed our dry-weasened curate, that
came from the north,
And patters the prayers from his
painted missal
With a squeaking voice like a penny
whistle,
Nodding his wig like a downy thistle.

So I pricked up my ears for news, the
while
Our priestling stood with a greasy smile
Wrinkling a countenance fallow with
bile.
"Ho! now, sir curate, 'tis our time at
last,
And we'll tutor the Whigs to feast or
fast,
Or pray with candle and book and
bell,
Or any thing likes you in heaven or
hell.
Hast heard the news, man? At noon
a crew
Of psalm-singing villains beset and slew
The good archbishop on Magus
Moor—
Burley and Hackston and some few
more—
Answered his prayers with a rascal
laugh,
And split his skull with a Jeddart staff.
There's news makes your ears to tingle.
—Ho!
What crop-eared dog have we here, I
trow
Eavesdropping?" Then I heard a
crash,
And there came on my crown a sabre-
slash;
And the courier galloped along the
street.
But that my bonnet was padded, to
meet
By-strokes of this sort, I had been
dead;
For all that our sucking bishop said,
Was "Now will our dean get the
vacant see,
And what may the prospect be for
me?"

So, neighbour Irwine, you well may
say,
"God be on the Pentland Hills this
day."

We parted then, each with a burden
of thought ;
As a gust of wind from the castle
brought
The din of arms and of clattering hoof
From the rough causeway far aloof ;
While the raven croaked his rusty caw,
Cawing over the soldier's law—
It was ever a friend to the raven's
maw.

Never another word crossed our lip ;
Only we knew by the steadfast grip
Of each other's hand—a certain
token—
That each had a matter as yet unspoken.

I was the youngest of all the three ;
And they should have left this gear to
me.
And I should have told them plainly
too
What it was in my heart to do.
But somehow or other that courier's
sabre
Rang in my head like a sounding tabor ;
And then we were hurried, for two or
three
Might not meet, but the devil would be
Right in the midst of them, syne or
soon,

In the shape of a curate or dragoon,
To worm the secret out of your head.
Yet I was the youngest, and should
have said
Plainly out to them all my will ;
And the old man's gray hairs haunt me
still—

The weird gray locks, and the withered
skin,
And the dark red pool they were
dabbled in.

As I say, I was young, and in troth,
till of late,

Tippet and rochet, church and state,
Missal and Bible, bishop and priest,
Mitre and altar, fast and feast,
Little recked I of them, better or worse,
If they left me only my hound and
horse,

A broad brown moor and a stag to
course.

Nay, I had been mettlesome, given to
frolic,

And once on a day gave our bishop a
colic,

By stately robing our old gray cat
In Episcopal raiment, rochet and hat,
And sending her out to hunt a mouse,
Just as his Lordship left the house.
But my wife Meg—I was courting her
then—

Would not hold nor bide from the
westland men ;

And I never could round a word in
her ear,

If I went not with her to pray, and hear
Saintly men in cellars hidden,

And Gospel truth from lips forbidden.
So I followed with never a graver
thought,

Till found of Him whom I had not
sought ;

For, mirthful and meddlesome, God's
own grace

Plucked me a brand from the burning
place.

Now, there was a rumour that Christ
would spread

A table next day by the watershed
Of the Pentland Hills where curlews
bred.

And I thought, as I heard the gather-
ing hum,

The trumpet call, and the rolling drum,
The pawing hoof, and the jangling rein,

Up in the castle rock again,—

"They are gathering here for deeds
accursed ;

They are gathering there with hearts
a-thirst

For the water of life ; and I must to
the road,

And keep the wolf from the lambs of
God.

Here's Turner with his hireling loons,
And Clavers'e with his devil's dragoons,

And Grierson o' Lagg and Dalzell o'
the Binns,

With the blood of saints on their
leprous skins ;

And the blood of the bishop on Magus
Moor,

Pricking them on for vengeance sure.
And there, by misty glen and rock,

Old men and maidens, the best of the
stock

Our land ever bred—be the others who
may—

In maud and bonnet they gather to pray.
And God sees all : but the bishop's ghost

Will be in, I fear, at the winning post."

So I mused down the street, till I
reached my own door,

Where I swithered uncertain, a minute
or more ;

Then I crossed to the other side,
hoping to see

My wife busy as wont at her house-
wifery ;

For she had no thought of what was
astir,

And it might be the last I should see
of her.

Then I took up my stand in a dark-
some nook,

Where the rain guttered on me, just
craving one look

Of her bonny blithe face ere I set to
the road,

And to leave her the peace and the
blessing of God.

But when I glanced up, where she
stood with our child,

Looking wistfully out on the tempest
wild,

And hushing the baby that wept on
her breast,

And moving about with the strange
unrest,

And standing by the window wrapt in
light,

And peering out into the darksome
night,

I could not abide to part from her
so :

Just a word, and a kiss, and then I
would go ;

No harm could come of a word and a
kiss ;

And how could I leave her in wretched-
ness ?

But alas ! when I found me in her
embrace,

And the babe on my knee crowing up
in my face,

And the fire blazing cheerily there on
the hearth,

And her eyes glancing clear, and the
light-hearted mirth

Gleesomely singing about the room,
Blithe as the birds in the early bloom—

I had not the heart to break in on her
joy.

So the hours flew by ; she cradled the
boy

Asleep on her round and dimpled arm,
Asleep on her bosom soft and warm,

And held him up for a parting kiss,
With a look of beaming happiness.

And then with mingled smiles and tears,
She spake of boding thoughts and fears,

Weird dreams and tales and luckless
rhymes

Of murdered men in the olden times,
Which haunted her the live-long night ;

And she could not get rid of them do
what she might ;

She had heard them last by her grandam's knee ; And what a foolish thing was she, To have such silly thoughts of me ! You may be sure I had much to do, Hearing her speak, to keep steady in view The thing it was in my heart to do. And once or twice it was on my tongue ; And once or twice the devil had sung A pretty lying song in my ear : But I drowned it quick with a word of prayer. So the hours flew by till the midnight fell, And the baby slept, and the mother as well ; And I crept from her side, like a guilty one, To speed on the work that must be done— God bless thee, Meg, and the little one ! On the Borough-muir road I had stabled a roan, With plenty of mettle and plenty of bone ; And just as the lights of morning broke By fits, like a flame leaping up in the smoke Of a fresh green log, I was trotting along, At a great round pace, with a silent throng Of stars overhead, beheld now and then Through a rift in the clouds, or a pause in the rain, A chill eerie night ! there was that in its breath Made you creep, like the air in a room where Death Is busy at work : and here and there, Ghostly glimmering through the air,	Phantom-lights were twinkling late, Quenchless either by wind or wet. I was troubled at heart ; for I thought at times Of my wife, with her dreams and her luckless rhymes, That would not go out of her head all night ; And whether she slept till morning light ; And how bitterly there she would weep and moan, When she waked and found the bird was flown, And would clasp the child, and be sure that they Were widow and orphan made this day. And then my conscience pricked me sore That I should have been there long hours before. But I never knew Turner's hireling loons, Nor any of Claverse's devil-dragoons Leave the flagon ere break of day, Till they slept the fumes of the drink away. So I thought 'twould be hours ere they were astir, And silently gave my roan the spur, As she snorted, and pricked her ears forward, and strode With her long round pace on the plashy road ; Holding on bravely by tower and tree, By Glencorse water, and Woodhouse- lee, And Rullion Green where the battle befell 'Tween the westland folk and the bloody Dalzell. And I never drew bridle and scarcely drew breath, For I rode on an errand of life and death,
--	--

And I felt as if nought but a galloping
pace

Could quiet my mind's uneasiness :

When all of a sudden my good roan
steed,

Who never yet failed me in hour of
need,

Sprang right from the path, with a cry
of quick fear—

A frightened cry and frightful to hear ;
While caw, caw, caw ! from under

her hoof,

The raven lazily rose aloof ;

Lazily rose on his broad black wing,

As loth to leave some horrible thing ;

And I fell without sense of life or pain

On the brown heath 'mid the plashing
rain—

The plashing rain, and the raven black,
Croaking and hopping lazily back.

How long in that stupor dull I lay

By the big white stone, I may not say :

But when I awoke, with senses dim,

And stiff and racked in each joint and
limb,

The dawn had brightened into the day,
And the light birds sang on the bend-

ing spray,

And the rain-drops hung on the leaves
overhead,

And the sunshine on the moorland
played,

Like a radiant smile kindling up in a
face,

And turning the rude into loveliness.

And there in the sunshine the old man
lay,

And the pool was red, and his hair
was gray ;—

Grisled locks in a pool of blood ;

While sleepily gorged the raven stood,
Blinking dull in the golden sun.

And God sees all : and the deed is
done ;

And the old man's race at length is run.

Too late—too late ; my neighbour
was dead ;

The saints were slain, and the birds
were fed ;

From east and from west the trooper
rode,

And the curate was priest, and the
trooper his God ;

And the wily informers had scent like
a beagle,

And wherever the carcass was there
was the eagle ;

And the crook and the mitre were
serfs to the sword,

And sanctified slaughter with texts
from the Word ;

And old men and maidens, preacher
and people,

From kirk and from kirkyard, from
pulpit and steeple,

They must take them to hiding, where
hiding is sure,

By the bleak Moffat water or Annan-
dale moor,

To the rocks and the mountains and
dens of the earth ;

And now in the wilderness all that is
worth

Of us, withers and wanes, as the meek
and the brave

Wait for the dawn, or look out for a grave.
But I have no part in their struggle or

hope,

Though I hear now and then, some-
thing faintly, their scope

Whispered low in the ear, as the salt
waves pass

And the sea-bird screams on the
rocky Bass.

For they found me laid by my neigh-
bour dead,

And they tried me with boots and a
cord on my head,

That started the eyes from their pits ;
but the twine

Wrung not a word from lips of mine.

And the last that I saw of my wife
was then
When I witness bore in the sight of
men,
And while the crafty lawyers plied
me,
The crowd opened up and she stood
beside me,
And she held up the boy, with a blush
without shame,
Saying—"He shall be proud of his
father's name."

ROTHES

I

WHAT will my wife say now?
She will be mad at our doin's:
Good lass, she'll not swear, but she'll
bow
Her knees to the Lord, and avow
We are bringing the glory to ruins.

2

If she would but just rap out an oath,
It would ease her as much as a
prayer,
And be very much better for both;
For I don't know how, but I'm
loth
To face her meek look of despair;

3

And to know that, all night on her
knees,
She will pray for the land and the
kirk,
And the crown and the sword and the
keys,
And the sinners that sit at their
ease,
Forgetting the covenant work.

4

And it's that which drives me to
drink;
With less than a bottle or two,
To help me to hiccup and wink,
I'd face a cannon, I think,
Sooner than come in her view.

5

And yet she's a good little saint:
What a knack she has now at
praying!
With her texts, and her phrases
quaint,
And a voice so low and faint;
And no one to hear what she's
saying!

6

Not a soul to hear even a word;
Alone in the dark there at night,
She will keep it up with the Lord;
And I wish just the Archbishop
heard
How she prays the old Ethiop
white.

7

Ecod! if she knew him as I,
She'd leave him alone in his skin.
Why, lass, he wishes to try
A screw on your thumb by and by,
And his boot on your tight little
shin.

8

But, curse him, before he does that
I'd give him an inch of cold steel
Right through the ribs and the fat,
As the man in the Judges gat,
For the good of the commonweal.

9

Who could have told the kite
 That I warned your chickens to
 run?
 And he threeped it on me, in spite
 Of my swearing black and white,—
 Which a gentleman wouldn't have
 done.

10

O wouldn't you just, my Lord
 Archbishop, rejoice to twist
 Round my wife's forehead a cord,
 And wring from her lips a word
 With a wedge on her poor little
 wrist?

11

And what would you say to a clutch
 Of my hand on your lying old
 throat?
 I don't think the land would care
 much,
 Though it found in the Leven such
 A pious Archbishop afloat.

12

It's the parson's business to preach
 A hell, when we give up our
 breath;
 But you make a hell for each
 Who differs from what you teach,
 And you don't put it off till death.

13

Still that ugly test must be tried,
 A snare and a lie though it be;
 For Lauderdale's Bess must hide,
 With acres of land and pride,
 Her sins and her pedigree.

14

And there will be nice pickings too,
 By Jove, for me and the like;
 Ay, ay, Bess, the test will do
 For me and the Bishop and you,
 Rather more than our prayers
 belike.

15

She's a rare one that for gold!
 I wonder how Noll got on
 With the jade: she's bought and
 sold
 Fat Lauderdale, foolish and old,
 And he can't call his soul his own.

16

Ah! well; but commend me still
 To a regular saint for a wife;
 For, do what you like, good or ill,
 They only just pray for you still,
 And sweeten the bitter of life.

17

There's my Anne now; she loves me,
 I swear,
 Though she knows me as bad as
 the devil;
 And when she found out that affair,
 She did nothing but offer a prayer
 To keep the old sinner from evil.

18

And I've used her rascally bad;
 There's no doubt of that, I admit;
 And her dear little heart, when it's
 sad,
 No comfort on earth ever had,
 But a quiet religious fit.

19

And yet I've agreed to the test
Which the crafty Archbishop may
put her ;
And I know that she'll only protest,
And pray, and go on like the rest,
With appeals to the Lord and the
future.

20

Why can't she be still, and content
With her preachings, her psalms,
and her prayers,
And to live like a sweet little saint,
And leave me to judge what is meant
By the things which they tell her
are snares ?

21

And where is the text and the line
For thus causing domestic strife ?
Is there Father, or Pope, or Divine
Who will say that her God should be
mine,
And that man should give in to his
wife ?

22

Ah ! well, but it's true, I have none,
Or nothing to speak of at least ;
And I'd rather she prayed there alone
For a change in my heart of stone,
Than chose me old Sharpe for her
priest.

23

And they shan't touch a hair of her
head,
While I have a hand and a dirk :
Bishop ! ay, he's a Bishop we made
To bless all the blood that we shed,
And to rule in the devil's own kirk.

24

Ho ! bring me a bottle of sack :
Is my lady waiting upstairs ?
Say—I'm off and can hardly be back,
Say—I'm searching the pedlar's pack,
Say—I'm gone, if you like, to my
prayers.

25

I can't see her face to-night ;
I am sure she suspects what is
doing ;
And then things get wind ; and they
slight
Me at council, and say in their spite
That I bring all their plans unto
ruin.

26

Now, I will see nobody till
I shall be as drunk as a lord,—
And then I'll see nobody still ;
But the parson may go, if he will,
Unless he would stretch a hemp
cord.

27

He's been with her all day, and he's
gruff,
Yet a gentleman too, of his kind,
With good blood in him, and stuff
To make a good fellow enough
If he had not a twist in his mind.

28

Say, I don't want his blood on my
head,
And am very much needing his
prayers,
As I mean to go drunk to my bed,
And am apt to be wild in the head,
If I find anybody upstairs.

29

It's a dreary place that den
Between the Lomonds bleak ;
But better for ghostly men
The ghostly and eerie glen
Than to hear the gallows creak.

30

Let the Archbishop gloom as he will ;
Let Lauderdale rant and swear ;
I've but kept them from doing some ill,
And we'll all have our nice pickings
still,
When we ask them to vow and
declare.

PEDEN THE PROPHET

1

Ah ! woe for the Lamb's dear Bride !
And woe for this covenant-land !
Compass'd on every side
With hate and treason and pride,
And feeble in heart and hand ;
The Lord will His wrath command
On a faithless land and Bride.

2

Dark is the day ; but worse
The night that is drawing near,
With Death on his pale white horse,
And the dead lying hid in the gorse,
And floating in river and mere,
While the streets of the city appear
Red with the blood of the corse.

3

I see the lean dogs creeping
To their feast in the lone dark
street ;
I see the foul birds leaping

To the house where a child is sleeping
On a mother's bosom sweet—
But her heart hath ceased to beat ;
And the foul birds are croaking and
leaping.

4

And we've not seen the worst of it
yet ;
And I wot not whether I may,
Though I sought the Lord, when we
met
Near the black Moffat water, to get
Just a blink of light on my way,
And to know if I should play
The man, in the worse times yet.

5

But he said, "Content ye now,
You shall be where I think best" :
"Yea, Lord," quoth I, "but Thou
Knowest I never did bow
To Baal with the rest,
Nor took the black, false test" :
But he said, "Content ye now."

6

I was sitting alone on the hill
By a thunder-blasted tree,
Where a corby had gorged his fill
Of a lamb that was lying ill ;
And in the red light he
Stood winking drowsily,
With the blood and fat on his bill.

7

The gray, cold mist was creeping
At gloaming over the hill,
The whaup in the stank was sleeping,
And the lonesome heron keeping
Its watch where the pool was still,
And slow and gray and chill
The gloaming mist was creeping.

8

Then I saw, as plain as eye
 Could see, the veil uplift,
 And the dark years sweeping by
 In terror and misery—
 Dark years, with never a rift
 In the cloud of blackness, swift
 Went sweeping gloomily by.

9

Airds Moss was nought but a ploy,
 And the Pentlands only a jest,
 And Bothwell Brig was a toy,
 And the Highland raid a joy;
 For East shall cry to West,
 And the dead shall seem to be
 blest,
 And all the past but a ploy.

10

I saw the trooper ride,
 With the blood on his bridle hand,
 Down by the Solway tide,
 And over the banks of Clyde;
 I saw o'er all the land
 The gruesome gibbet stand,
 And the godless trooper ride.

11

Silent the song of labour;
 And the clap of the mill was dumb;
 Hushed were the pipe and the tabor;
 And only the clash of the sabre
 Rang to the fife and the drum,
 As the red troopers come,
 Trampling the fields of our labour.

12

The maid with her milking pail
 Wept at the empty byre;
 Dazed and eerie and pale,

The husbandman with his flail,
 Stood by the smouldering pyre,
 As the wild red sparks of fire
 Blazed up in the rising gale.

13

Wailing down in the glen,
 Weeping up on the hill,
 A cry from the cities of men,
 And the cleft of the rock and the den;
 For the dead lay unburied, until
 The time and half time fulfil
 The word of the Lord of men.

14

There was none to woo or to wed,
 There was none to speak of cheer,
 There was none to lift up the head,
 As the land sat down with its dead—
 Sat down in the dust with fear,
 While the Baal-priests drew near,
 And mocked at the bowed-down
 head.

15

Labour, and pleasure, and faith,
 All of them were forgot,
 And men held in their breath
 At the ghastly riot of death;
 For terror did quite besot
 Even them who had wrestled and
 fought
 Hitherto in the hope of the faith.

16

I saw it all, and I think
 The Lord hath shown to me
 Sometimes, a wonderful blink
 Of things beyond the brink
 Of the dark futurity,—
 Even more than I want to see;
 But it's all for your good, I think.

17

You call me a prophet, and
 Maybe I am, indeed,
 All the prophet a land
 That hath broken its covenant band,
 Either shall get or need—
 And yet but a shaking reed
 In a dreary desert land.

18

Sometimes I'm tempted sore
 To say, Lord, let me be
 As blind as others or more ;
 And sometimes I've thought, before,
 It was but guessing in me,
 And nothing of prophecy,—
 Shrewd guessing, and nothing more.

19

So the Tempter will sift me like
 wheat,
 Till I say to him, Get thee behind !
 Or trample him under my feet :—
 And bless me not when you meet,
 For it's not all blessing, I find ;
 Yea, I had liefer be blind,
 When Satan will sift me like wheat.

20

And guess or grace, I am sure
 There are dark days near at hand
 For the Lord's afflicted poor
 And the Lamb's bride to endure,
 In a waste and weary land,
 From gaol and gibbet and brand,
 And the trooper's vengeance sure.

21

For if God ever spoke to me,
 It was just that night on the hill,
 As I sat by the blasted tree,

And the gray mists eerily
 Crept, ghostly and slow and chill,
 And the corby gorged his fill,
 As the word was given to me.

OLD GREYFRIARS

I

ALL of us from the western shires,
 Fifteen hundred men,
 They marched us into the Old
 Greyfriars,
 About the stroke of ten :
 Hungry and wounded and worn and
 weary,
 We wist it was but for a night
 That they marched us into the kirk-
 yard eerie,
 In the dusky evening light.

2

A bonny kirkyard is the Old Greyfriars,
 When the wallflower blooms in June,
 And scatters its scent with the fresh
 sweetbriar's
 Under the glint of the moon :
 And we ranged us on the green grass
 there,
 Or under the ivy-tod,
 And raised our psalm and offered our
 prayer
 To Jacob's mighty God.

3

But long ere the dank November day,
 When the earth was sodden with rain,
 And the chill fog clung where the
 long grass lay
 Rotting with damp amain,
 Of all who came from the western shires,
 The fifteen hundred men,
 Had you reckoned us well in the Old
 Greyfriars,
 Not three were there for ten.

4

There were some that died in the
summer tide,
Rotting away like sheep;
There were some went mad with the
visions they had,
Between awake and asleep;
And some were traitors to the faith,
And signed their hope away—
Better for them had they met their death
On Bothwell Brig that day.

5

O Bothwell Brig! that wert so big
With hope to us and more;
O Bothwell Brig! the westland whig
May well thy name deplore.
And ye who would guide the stormy
tide,
Think well ere ye begin;
For ye scrupled away our lives that day,
Ere we the bridge could win.

6

It's oh for courage! and oh for sense!
And a Joab with the host!
That we may stand on our sure defence,
Ere yet the day be lost.
Here were we from the western shires,
Good fifteen hundred men;
And reckon us now in the Old
Greyfriars,
There are not three for ten.

THE CONFESSION OF ANNAPLE GOWDIE, WITCH

I

ANNIE WINNIE and me
Were both at Yester kirk;—

3

She on a broom, and I on a straw,
“Horse and haddock” o’er North
Berwick Law
We rode away in the mirk.

2

It was Fastern’s Even,
And we lichted down on a grave,
Where an ape preached loud to a
ghostly crowd,
Surpliced well with a bonny white
shroud,
And a corby sang the stave.

3

“The covin” all was there;
Thirteen of us with “the maid”;—
She was Bessie Vickar from Kelvin
side;
And wow! but she hotched in her
unco pride—
Deil thraw her neck for a jade.

4

And there was Pickle-the-wind,
And there was Over-the-dyke,
And Ailie Nesbit, Able-and-stout,
And Elspie Gourlay, Good-at-a-bout;
Buzzing all like a byke.

5

Black Jock was in his tantrums;
And hech! but he was daft!
Alick Flett, with his chanter het,
Fizzing whenever his lips it met,
Skirled away in the laft.

6

Oh, we were crouse and canty
A’ doon in Yester kirk,
And we supped on the toad and the
hooded craw,
Daintily spread on a coffin braw,
At midnight in the mirk.

7

And syne we held a session,
 And tried the lassies there ;
 Twal gruesome carles were elders
 good,
 And a black tom-cat for bethral stood,
 And the foul fiend took the chair.

8

And Elspie Gourlay first
 Confessed to a strangled bairn ;
 And Bessie Vickar allowed that she
 Whummled a boat in a quiet sea,
 With a bonny young bride in the
 stern,

9

And some had played their cantrips
 Wi' poor wives' milking kine ;
 And one had made an image good,
 And crucified it on holy rood,
 That the Laird's ae son nicht
 pine.

10

But me and Annie Winnie,
 The foul thief kissed us baith ;
 For we choked the priest on the
 Eucharist
 When he was glowering at Effie
 M'Christ,
 And speaking of holy faith.

11

Hech ! sirs, but we had grand fun
 Wi' the muckle black deil in the
 chair,
 And the muckle Bible upside doon,
 A' gangin' withershins roun' and
 roun',
 And backwards saying the prayer ;

12

About the warlock's grave
 Withershins gangin' roun',
 And kimmer and carline had for licht
 The fat o' a bairn they buried that
 nicht,
 Unchristened beneath the moon.

13

And, when the red cock crew
 In the farmstead up on the hill,
 And the black tom-cat began to
 mew,
 Witch and warlock, away we flew
 In the morning gray and chill.

14

And my gudeman was sleeping,
 Wi' the besom at his side,
 And hech ! but he kissed the bonny
 broom,
 My braw gudeman, myauld bridegroom,
 As I lichted doon frae my ride.

15

And Annie Winnie and me
 Crack crouse o' Yester kirk,
 And how she on the broom and I on
 a straw,
 "Horse and hattock" o'er North
 Berwick Law
 Rode away in the mirk.

16

But what if it all was a dream
 Of things I had heard before,
 And I only said what they wished to
 be said,
 When they twisted the cord round my
 old gray head
 Till flesh could bear no more ?

THE COMPLAINT OF
DEACON BIRSE,
BURGESS, ABERDEEN

I

A PLAGUE on their kirks and their
covenants both !
And their preachings long and rife !
I wot not how many a test and oath
I have ta'en for a quiet life.
First I must swear to Master Cant,
And then to the Solemn League ;
And then they would have me both
recant,
And join some other intrigue.

2

I've sworn at their bidding black and
white,
And signed and sealed and declared ;
I've boxed the compass round outright,
And the feint a boddle I cared ;
And I hardly know what I am to-day,
Or what was the last I swore ;
But hey ! for the friar of orders gray !
He's ready to clear my score.

3

A plague on them all—their mitre and
bishop,
Their presbyter and their Book !
Can't they leave me alone to barrel
my fish up ?
And hang my pot on the crook ?
A bonny kirk ! as poor as a rat,
And hungry as ever a beagle,
A brat that an imp of the devil begat,
The Protestant wallydraigle !

4

I want to trade in timber and hide,
And salmon from the Dee,
And the bonny white pearls from
Ythan side,
And the herring that crowds the sea ;

For silk to busk my lady fine,
Or brandy in the flask,
Or a drop of the kindly claret wine,
Or malvoisie in the cask.

5

I've a lugger good with Tarland wood
For Flushing ready to sail ;
And my dainty smack, by the almanac,
Should be home from Portingale ;
But what with their kirk and their
covenant work,
Hardly a wind blows right ;
And we'll never have luck till the
ancient kirk
Comes to her own some night.

6

That's a vintage coming from Portin-
gale,
Will make old Rothes smack ;
And the tipping Chancellor pays me
well,
When he sends me a cargo back—
A cargo of canting preachers for't,
To sell in the new plantation ;
Hee ! they set me once in a sackcloth
shirt
To win my soul's salvation.

7

A plague on them all ! but they won't
grow fat
In my old schooner's hold,
With a skipper who knows what I
would be at,
And who likes the chink of the
gold.
And, if some of them happen to die
on the way,
Who forced their oaths down my
throat ;
It's hey ! for the friar of orders gray
Who assoilzies me all for a groat.

MARION BROWN'S LAMENT

1

"WHAT think you now of your braw
goodman?"

Ah! woe is me!

My heart was high when I began,
My heart was high, and my answer ran,
"More than ever he is to me."

2

Mickle thought I of my bridegroom
brave,

Ah! woe is me!

Mickle I thought of him douce and
grave,

When he waled me out among the lave,
Me, a poor maiden, his wife to be.

3

But there on the greensward lying dead,
Ah! woe is me!

As I laid on my lap his noble head,
And kissed the lips that for Jesus bled,
More than ever he was to me.

4

My heart was high when I began,

Ah! woe is me!

I was so proud of my brave goodman,
Never a tear from my eyelids ran,
Although they gathered in my e'e.

5

But when I laid him on his bed,

Ah! woe is me!

And spread the face-cloth over his
head,

And sat me down beside my dead,
O but my heart grew sair in me.

6

Weary and eerie the night went by,

Ah! woe is me!

Dark and cold, and so was I,
And aye the wind moaned drearily
Over the moor, and back to me.

7

And aye as I looked at the empty
chair,

Ah! woe is me!

And the Book that he left open there,
And the text that bade me cast my
care

On the Father of all that cared for
me;

8

And aye as my Mary and little Will,

Ah! woe is me!

Whispered, Father is sleeping still,
And hush! for Minnie is weary and
ill,

My heart was like to break in me.

9

It's well for men to be heroes grand;

Ah! woe is me!

But a woman's hearth is her country,
and

A desolate home is a desolate land;
And he was all the world to me.

M'KAIL'S FAREWELL

1

FAREWELL, my friends, and parents
dear;

And weep not o'er my bloody bier,
For grace and glory triumph here.

2

Farewell, my foes ; I pray for you ;
 Shew mercy, Lord, for Thou art
 true ;
 Alas ! they know not what they do.

3

Farewell, thou earth, where I have
 trod,
 And seen the wondrous ways of God,
 With comfort of His staff and rod.

4

Farewell, ye sun and moon and stars,
 And planets pale, and fiery Mars,
 And comets dire, foreboding wars :

5

Star-pavement of His house are ye,
 Shining in glorious majesty.
 But soon beneath my feet to be.

6

Farewell, thou Book of grace divine,
 So loved and pondered every line,
 Book of the world's best hope and
 mine :

7

Soon, face to face, I'll see with awe
 The gospel truth and holy law,
 Which yet as in a glass I saw.

8

And farewell, Church, the Lamb's
 dear Bride,
 Whose garments now with blood
 are dyed,
 With blood, too, washed and
 purified ;

9

And farewell, time ; I part with thee,
 And welcome immortality,
 And incorrupted life to me.

10

Mortal, immortal now, to Him,
 Who sits between the cherubim,
 I sing the everlasting hymn—

11

“ Worthy the Lamb for us that died,
 With crown of thorn and wounded
 side,
 Despised, rejected, crucified.”

12

I hear the strain, and would away
 To them who neither preach nor pray,
 But praise for ever, night and day.

13

Farewell, I step on that bright shore ;
 My weary pilgrimage is o'er,
 And welcome home for evermore.

OLRIG GRANGE

BOOK FIRST

EDITORIAL

I, Herr Professor Künst, Philologus,
Editor of these rhymes—having no
knack
That way, myself, to make my words
go chime,
Or none that makes a crystal of my
thought,
Face answering to face, and so built up
By inward force of Law inevitable—
Care not to tag mere fringes to my lines,
And mar their meaning. 'Tis a pretty
sight
The lissom maiden dancing her light
measure,
And keeping time with castanet or
timbrel,
When maiden, dance, and timbrel all
are one
Joy of great nature. But enough for
me
The unwonted dance without the
castanet,
The measured tread without the timing
jingle.
God giveth speech to all, song to the
few.
A quaint old gateway, flanked on
either side
By grim, heraldic beasts with beak and
claw

And scaly coating — yet four-footed
beasts—
Opened into a long, straight avenue,
Lined by rough elms, stunted, and
sloping west,
And nipped by sharp sea-winds.
Without a turn,
It ran up to a tall, slim, grey, old
house,
With many blinking windows, row on
row,
And high-pitched gables rising, step
by step,
Above heraldic beasts with beak and
claw,
That pranced at every corner. A
green bank,
Broken with flower-plots, on the one
side dropt
Down to a brattling brook ; upon the
other
A group of brown Scotch firs reared
their straight boles
And spreading crowns, breaking the
chill east wind ;
And then a holly hedge enclosed the
garth,
Which altogether covered scant an
acre.
Eastward, you saw the glimmer of
the sea,
And the white pillar of the lighthouse
tall
Guarding the stormy Ness : a minster
church

Loomed with twin steeples high above
 the smoke
 Of a brisk burgh, offspring of the
 church
 And of the sea, and with an old Norse
 love
 Of the salt water, and the house of
 God,
 And letters and adventure. On the
 west,
 Cleft by the stream, a slow-retiring hill
 Embayed a goodly space which once
 had been
 Waste moorland for the curlew, and
 the snipe
 Haunted its marshes. Lately, growing
 wealth,
 From fleets of fishing craft, and
 ventures far
 To Greenland and Archangel, had
 subdued
 The peat-hag and the stony wilder-
 ness :
 And here and there a citizen's country-
 house
 Stood among fields where cattle
 browsed, or corn
 Was rustling : yet there still were, here
 and there,
 Stretches of heathy moss and yellow
 gorse,
 And desert places strewn with white
 bleached stones,
 And grey rocks tufted o'er with birch
 and hazel.
 And through the gorse, and over rock
 and stone,
 The brattling brook leaped downward
 to the sea.

 The slim, grey house with its heraldic
 beasts,
 Nestling in its scant acre of flower-plots
 And green sward, at the end of the
 elm-tree drive,
 Stood plainly in ancestral dignity,

Aloof from citizen's villa : shorn of
 wealth,
 It was the home of culture and simple
 taste,
 And heir of fine traditions.

By the door,
 Where it was hid by honey-suckle
 sprays
 And briar-rose that trailed around the
 porch,
 There stood a youth, at early twilight,
 making
 Impatient gestures, switching thistle-
 down
 And nettle and dandelion, and whate'er
 His hasty stroke might reach ; yet
 humorous
 Rather than fretful, for the art was his
 To break vexations with a ready jest,
 As one that, on the stirrup duly rising,
 Rides lightly through the world. A
 graceful youth,
 And tall, and slightly stooping, with
 features high
 And thin and colourless ; yet earnest
 life
 Beamed, full of hope and energy and
 help,
 From his great lustrous eyes, though
 now and then
 They swam into a dreamy, far-off gaze,
 As seeing the invisible. He was
 A student who had travelled many a
 field
 Of arduous learning, planted venturous
 foot
 On giddy ledge of speculative thought,
 And searched for truth o'er mountain,
 shore and sea,
 In stone and flower, and every living
 thing
 Where he might read the open secret
 of God
 With his own eyes, and ponder out its
 meaning.

Intent he was to know, and knowing do
 The work laid to his hand ; yet ever-
 more,
 As he toiled up the solemn stair with
 joy,
 Caught by some outlook on a larger
 world,
 He seemed to pause, and gaze, and
 dream a dream.
 These moods I noted when he was my
 pupil,
 And some strange vocable from India,
 Or fragment of the old Semitic speech
 Would suddenly arrest his eager quest,
 And sunder us, like the ocean or the
 grave.

So stood he, in the twilight, near his
 home,
 And waiting for his sister, smote the
 weeds ;
 Impetuous, humorous, bright, and
 mystical,
 The wonder and the glory of the place,
 Scarce out of boyhood, yet the pride
 of all.

Trained for a priest, for that is still
 the pride
 And high ambition of the Scottish
 mother,
 There was a kind of priestly purity
 In all his thoughts, and a deep under-
 tone
 Ran through his gayest fancies, and
 his heart
 Reached out with manifold sympathies,
 and laid
 Fast hold on many outcast and alone
 I' the world. But being challenged
 at the door
 Of God's high Temple to indue
 himself
 With armour that he had not proved,
 to clothe
 With articles of ready-made Belief

His Faith inquisitive, he rent the Creed
 Trying to fit it on, and cast it from
 him ;
 Then took it up again, and found it
 worn
 With age, and riddled by the moth,
 and rotten.
 Therefore he trod it under foot, and
 went
 Awhile with only scant fig-leaves to
 clothe
 His naked spirit, longing after God,
 But striving more for knowledge than
 for faith.
 The Priest was left behind ; the hope
 of Glory
 Became pursuit of Fame ; and yet a
 light
 From heaven kept hovering always
 over him,
 Like twilight from a sun that had gone
 down.

LOQUITUR THOROLD

Quick, Hester, quick ! the old scarlet
 cloak
 And silken hood are dainty trim
 'Mong birch and hazel and lichen'd
 rock ;
 The sun is but a little rim
 Above the hill, and twilight dim
 Is setting o'er the leaping brook
 Where we our summer pleasance took,
 When youth was light of heart and
 limb,
 And Life was the dream of a Fairy
 Book.

Quick ! let us spend the gloaming
 there—
 A plague on bonnets, shawls and pins,
 And last nice touches of the hair,
 That just begin when one begins
 To lose his patience ! Women's sins

Are not alone the ills they do,
But those that they provoke you to,
While smiling lips and dimpling chins
Wonder what can be the matter with
you.

Well, minx ! I hope you're pleased
at last :

You've made yourself an angel nice,
And me a brute this half-hour past.
Now, did you ever count the price
When each new grace costs some new
vice ?

You fondle a curl—my wrath I pet ;
You finger a ribbon—I fume and fret ;
You'd ruin a husband worse than dice,
Buying your beauty at such a rate.

Look, how the slanting sunbeams long
Gird with light-rings the grey birch
trees ;

And from his unseen place of song
The sky-lark on the evening breeze
Shakes down his fluttering melodies :
The coney from their burrows creep,
The troutlets in the still pools leap,
The pines their odorous gums release,
And the daisies are pink in their dewy
sleep.

Perchance we ne'er shall hear again,
Thus hand in hand, the swift brook
flow,

Except in dreams when we are fain
To haunt the fabled long-ago ;
For ere to-morrow's sun is low,
I haste me to the crowded street
Where every stranger face I meet
Shall less of kithely feeling show
Than the rippling gleam of this water
sweet.

Nay, dear ; my heart is full of hope ;
Bid me not stay in my career.
Our little Bourg hath little scope
For aught but gossip in the ear ;

And I must gird me to appear
A man among the strong and brave,
A man with purpose high and grave,
Still fronting duty without fear,
And helming my prow to the threat-
ening wave.

'Twas sweet to dream as we have
dreamed

Together in years long ago,
When Life might be as Fancy
deemed,

For aught the happy child could
know,

A bright illusion, and a show
Create at will, and shaped to meet
Each changeful whim, and quaint
conceit,

And varying mood of joy or woe,
Nor ever with tragic end complete.

But ill for him who will not see
The dream to be a dream indeed,
And life a fateful mystery,
And iron fact the only creed
To lean on in the hour of need.

The child may dream ; the man must
act

With reverence for the world's great
fact ;

And look to toil and sweat and
bleed,

And gather his energies all compact.

Why might I not my battle fight
Here by your side with pen and
book ?

Girls never understand aright
That men must leave the ingle-nook
And for a larger wisdom brook
Experience of a harder law,
And learn humility and awe :

And books are mirrors where you
look

But on shadows of things which
others saw.

How sweet the old brook tinkles still
Through daisy mead and golden
broom,
Where once we placed our water-mill,
And heard it clicking in the gloom,
Hushed, sleepless, in our little room !
Yonder, we caught the tiny trout—
Our first—you carried it about
All day, complaining of its doom,
And trying each pool if its life were
gone out.

There are no traces of the mill :
But lo ! our garden in the nook,
The walks we shaped with simple
skill,
Bordered with white stones from the
brook ;
And there are still some flowers we
took
From garden plots, and planted here :
Our works decay and disappear,
God's frailest works abide, and look
Down on the ruins we toil to rear.

Here is the sloping mossy bank,
With slender pansies purple-eyed,
And drooping hare-bells, and the
rank
Plume-fern in all its palmy pride ;
And yonder the still waters glide
Where big raspberries and brambles
grew :—
The stream was deep and broad for
you,
And there my imping manhood tried
To reach at them for my sister true.

Lo ! here we dreamed the Pilgrim's
dream ;
And went forth, that bright summer
day,
To seek the New Jerusalem,
Along the strait and thorny way
Tangled with gorse and bramble
spray,

But never found the wicket-gate :
Distraught, our mother wandered late,
While we beside the mill-dam lay,
And saw the newt creep 'mong the
bulrushes great.

There, too, we dreamt a lonely isle,
With white waves girdled by the sea
That stormed along the beach, the
while
A good ship struggled gallantly ;
And I alone must saved be,
And thou wert Friday, by-and-by,
Whose mystic footprint caught my
eye
On the brown sand ; and thou to me
Wert slave ever ready to run or fly.

And we had Genii of the Lamp—
The lamp was ne'er so rubbed before ;
And jars and crocks we left in damp
Odd corners, all the night or more,
Which we as fishers hauled ashore,
Listening to hear the prisoned Jinn
Bemoan his captive fate within :
And what, if he were free to soar
Like a dreadful giant with smoke and
din !

Ay me ! What happy dreams we had !
And still they linger fondly here ;
The air seems nimble with the glad
Quaint fancies of our childhood dear ;
And here, at least, they do appear
Half-real still ; it seems profane
To reason them down as fancies vain,
Where all that meets the eye and ear
Brings the faith and glory of youth
again.

Then by-and-by great thoughts were
ours
Of triumph and high enterprise,
As knowledge broadened with our
powers,
And Science oped our wondering eyes

To Nature's fruitful mysteries.
 No life of vulgar wealth we sought,
 Nor pleasure from indulgence got ;
 We would be brave and true and wise,
 And hoard all treasures of noble
 thought.

The heroes of historic age
 Beckoned us on to glorious deeds
 And hardy training, and to wage
 Victorious war on foemen weeds :
 And now we breathed on oaten reeds,
 Or conned, apart, a secret song,
 Ashamed as if the deed were wrong ;
 And now we rubbed your amber beads
 For trial of their attraction strong.

We gathered wild flowers in the woods,
 We wandered miles for heath and fern,
 We found in brakes the callow broods
 Of singing birds ; we sought the erne
 On its lone cliff ; and strove to learn
 All Nature's kindly providence
 For all its creatures, and the sense
 Of all its changes to discern,
 With all the infinite why and whence.

We turned the glass to moon and
 stars,
 The Pleiads, and the Milky Way,
 To Saturn's ring, and fiery Mars,
 And Venus haunting close of day :
 We bent the glass to watch the play
 Of spasm-like life in water drops ;
 And where the red stone upward
 crops
 We hammered, eager for a prey
 Of moss or fern from the old-world
 copse.

And oh those days beside the sea !
 The skerries paved with knotted
 shells,
 The bright pools of anemone,
 The star-fish with their fretted cells,
 The scudding of the light foam-bells

Along the stretch of rippled strand
 Spotted with worms of twisted sand,
 The white gulls, and the shining sails,
 And the thoughts they all brought
 from the Wonder-land !

And fondly watched our mother dear,
 The dawning promise of our youth,
 Liltng a ballad low and clear,
 And fostering fearless love of truth
 And meekness, piety and ruth,
 And charity and womanhood ;
 For so she said, that to be good
 Was to be rich in very sooth ;
 And the good Lord gave His children
 food.

And still the unfailing laughter pealed
 At homely jests that ne'er grew old ;
 And still we breathless heard, and
 thrilled
 When the old winter's tale was told ;
 And still, as thought grew keen and
 bold,
 Her loving instinct steadied all
 The march of mind with faithful call
 To patient duty manifold,
 And to wait and work when the light
 was small.

O happy childhood ! wakening first
 In moony realms of fond romance ;
 And quenching soon a deeper thirst
 In science that refrained to glance
 Scorn at old faiths : so we could once
 Believe we heard the mermaid sing,
 And that the deft Fays shaped the ring,
 Footing o' moonlights in the dance,
 And that the Spirit lay hidden in
 every thing.

Nor need that early faith be all
 In clear defined knowledge lost :
 Though never Greek to Ilium's wall
 In the swift ships the sea had crossed,
 Each wrathful king with banded host,

The tale of Troy were true to me,
More than bare fact of history :
There is more truth than is engrossed
In your musty sheepskin guarantee.

And there is truth transcending far
The way of scientific thought,
Which travels to the farthest star,
And verges on the smallest mote,
But all beyond it knoweth not ;
Its ladder, based on earth, must lean
Its summit on the felt and seen ;
But ever our hearts their rest have sought
In that dim Beyond, where it hath not
been.

'Tis wisdom, doubtless, for the man
To learn the fact and stedfast Law ;
Yet Wisdom also in its plan
Embraced the child's great wondering
awe

Which found the Unseen in all it saw,
Whom now we seek with cruel strain
Of longing heart and 'wilder'd brain,
Tossing our barren chaff and straw
In search of the old diviner grain.

Can it be wisdom to forget
What wisdom taught us yesterday ?
What if the form may change, and yet
The truth abide that in it lay ?
And what if Jinn, and Ghost, and Fay,
Were but the form of highest truth—
The Father's parable for youth,
To teach that Law is Will, to say,
I am the worker of all, in sooth !

So might the dream be, after all,
The key which confident Science lost,
And hath been groping round the wall
Of mystery, perplex'd and toss'd,
In search of, making many a boast,
Yet conscious that her universe
Of several facts and laws is scarce
God's living world ; yea, is at most
His graveyard, whither she drove
His hearse.

Our Science knows no Father yet ;
He seems to vanish as we think ;
And most of all, when we are set
To fish for Faith upon the brink
Of Nature ; we draw, link by link,
A line of close-plied reasoning
Elaborate, and hope to bring,
Besides the baited thought we sink,
God from the depths at the end of a
string !

Ah ! who shall find the perfect
Whole

In the small fragment that we see ?
Or mirror in the flesh-bound soul
The image of Immensity ?
Our hearts within us faint, and we,
Amid the storm and darkness driven,
Cry out for God to earth and heaven :
But what if all our answer be
Only our cry by the echoes given ?

As light outside the Temple vast
Coming and going with sudden gleams
On altar, pillar, and pavement cast,
Down on our lower world he streams
An externe glory. So it seems ;
But who can tell ? The things that
press
On our dream-life's half-consciousness,
Though real as the hills and streams,
Are the stuff dreams are made of
nevertheless.

O days of Faith ! when earth
appeared

A Bethel sure, an House of God,
And in the dream His voice was
heard,
And sorrow was His chastening rod ;
And stony pillow and grassy sod
Seemed, lying on the Father's breast ;
And men had many an angel guest,
And ever where the pilgrim trod
God was near him, The Highest and
Best.

Great days of Faith and miracle !
 When nature might not be explained,
 And the earth kept her secret well,
 But there was worship high, unfeigned,
 And men were noble, and God

reigned ;
 They were not barren though we
 laugh,
 And swear their mills ground finest
 chaff ;

For peace and love and truth unstained
 Are more than steam and a telegraph.

How is it that our modern thought
 Has travelled from these sacred ways,
 And every certain truth is bought
 By parting with some Faith and
 Praise ?

We light our earth with the quenched
 rays

Of heaven : and yet we only seek
 Truth for the strong and for the weak,
 Loving it more than length of days,
 Or the ruby lip and the blooming
 cheek.

Our science, with its several facts
 And fragmentary laws, hath lost
 The unity that all compacts,
 And makes a cosmos of the host.
 Force changes, but its changes cost,
 And in the elemental war
 Conserving transformations are
 So wasteful, Time shall one day boast
 But a burnt-out sun and a cinder star.

Well, well ; our mother knew no laws,
 Except the Ten Commandments clear,
 Nor talked of First, or Final Cause,
 But walked with God in love and fear,
 And always felt that He was near
 By instinct of a spirit true ;
 And she had peace and strength, in lieu
 Of that unrest and trouble here
 Which break like the billows on me
 and you.

Enough ; we have not yet redeemed
 The promise of our early days ;
 We are not all that we have dreamed,
 Nor all that she would crown with
 praise ;

But we have loving been always,
 And earned some little fame, and hope
 For more where there is ampler scope ;
 And you will crown me with my bays,
 Sweet sister mine, when I reach the top.

Nay, say not that I shall forget,
 And find a dearer love than thee ;
 A sweeter love was never yet
 Than this sufficing joy in me :
 Thou art my fulness. I shall be
 But half a heart and head and will,
 Except thou be beside me still,
 For in our being's mystery
 Ever the better part thou didst fill.

Not jealous, say you ? but afraid
 About my principles and views ?
 Why, it was you that first betrayed,
 You little sceptic, dangerous, loose,
 And unsound doctrine : I but use
 The wicked weapons that you made :
 Even as a child you never prayed
 With half my faith in those old Jews,
 And we ne'er got the Catechism into
 your head.

But my Faith is not gone, although
 At times it seems to fade away.
 I would I were as long ago ;
 I cling to God, and strive to say
 The devil and all his angels Nay :
 But in the crucible of thought
 Old forms dissolve, nor have I got,
 Or seem to wish, new moulds of clay
 To limit the boundless truth I sought.

Can the great God be aught but vague,
 Bounded by no horizon, save
 What feeble minds create to plague
 High reason with ?—We madly crave,
 For definite truth, and make a grave,

Through too much certainty precise,
And logical distinction nice,
For all the little Faith we have,
Buying clear views at a terrible price.

Too dear, indeed, to part with Faith
For forms of logic about God,
And walk in lucid realms of death,
Whose paths incredible are trod
By no soul living. Faith's abode
Is mystery for evermore,
Its life to worship and adore,
And meekly bow beneath the rod,
When the day is dark, and the burden
sore.

What soft, low notes float everywhere
In the soft glories of the moon !
Soft winds are whispering in the air,
And murmuring waters softly croon
To mossy banks a muffled tune ;
Softly a rustling faint is borne
Over the fields of waving corn—
God's still small voice, we drown at noon,
Which is everywhere heard in the even
and morn.

Hush ! let us go. The stars shine out,
Yonder the moonlight on the sea,—
The fishers spread their sails about
Its tangled rings ; from yon lime tree
The hum of some belated bee
Sways as if lost ; I seem to hear
A boding murmur in my ear
Of coming storm. What, if it be
Omen of tempest in my career ?

Strange ! that whene'er the hour
arrives,
Which we have longed for day and night,
To act the purpose of our lives,
Fades all the glory and the light,
Fails too the sense of power and might ;
And there are omens in the air,
And voices whispering Beware !—
But never victor in the fight
Heeded the portents of fear and care.

BOOK SECOND

EDITORIAL

SHE sat alone at evening by the fire
In a dim parlour panelled with brown
pine,
Some sewing in her lap—yet she
sewed not,
A book in hand—and yet she did not
read,
My Hester, as she sits beside me now,
His sister, twin in birth, in culture twin,
And with a marked unlikeness,
strangely like.

For he was tall, and a black shock of
hair,
Of stiff, rough hair, rose o'er a fore-
head broad
And noticeable, though you noticed only
The large grey eyes beneath—not
cruel-grey,
But swimming dreamy eyes that
seemed to gaze
Into a world of wonders far away.
And she was fair, a golden blue-eyed
maid,
A slight, small girl, with the Norse
aspect frank,
And sunny and intelligent, and firm
Of purpose ; for she never dreamt, or
dreamt
Knowingly, swinging on an anchor held
Fast to a bottom of clearest conscious-
ness :
A lady practical, imperative,
With mind compact and clear and self-
possessed,
And reason peremptory and competent ;
Ne'er blinded by the glamour of loving
thought,
And yet not less enamoured with her
thought,
But loyal, true and womanly. Wherein

The unlike likeness lay you could not
 tell ;
 But as you travelled with them day by
 day,
 And grew familiar with their looks
 and ways,
 And knew the tenor of their thoughts,
 you felt
 The twain were twin alike in mind and
 body.
 Deft is she to detect, and to dissect
 Folly and foible and weakness, and
 with keen
 Shaft of light humour, or bolt of
 piercing wit
 Can reach the joints and marrow ; yet
 she says
 That if her hero is but brave and true,
 She knows herself to be so little and poor,
 And knows the world, beside, so mean,
 and false,
 And knows how hard the battle to be
 true,
 That she bates not her faith or love or
 worship
 For seams and flaws that only show
 him human,
 And linked by weakness closer to our
 love.

 And in those years her brother she
 adored,
 And he was worthy ; and she loves
 me now ;
 With all my sins and mine infirmities
 At large writ in her book, she loves
 me still,
 My Hester who is sitting by my side,
 And in whose features, scanning one
 by one,
 I trace, amid unlikeness, likeness strange
 To him who halved a common life
 with her.

 Of an old stock, lairds of the barren
 moorland

While mitred abbots lorded there
 supreme,
 But Vikings from Norwegian fiords long
 Before the cross or mitre or the light
 Of Christian Faith left but the names
 of Thor
 And Thing and Balder clinging to the
 shores ;
 In later times they gathered from the sea
 Wealth that the land denied, and
 swept the coast
 With net and yawl, and had their iron-
 bound fleets
 Spearing the Arctic-whale, whose jaw-
 bones arched
 A lofty gateway to their busy wharf ;
 Or hunting seal, and walrus fierce in
 battle,
 But faithful and piteous to its uncouth
 young :
 And thereof many a stirring tale was told
 Of perilous combat, touched with
 pathos rude,
 By weather-beaten mariners at home
 In the long nights beside the winter fire.
 So they grew rich, and had enriched
 the land ;
 But the last Burgher-laird died young,
 and left
 Many large ventures on the perilous sea,
 And in more perilous mines. His
 gentle widow,
 Harassed by alien cares, retired at
 length
 With her twin children from the
 'wilderling task,
 Cheerfully leaving three parts of her
 wealth
 Somewhere—she knew not where—in
 falling srip,
 And flooded mines, and meshes of the
 law.

 But from that hour, a happy mother, she
 Lived for her children, trained them
 faithfully

With generous culture to all nobleness,
Giving them for inheritance the wealth
Of the old wisdom and the new
research :

And then she also died. Thorold and
Hester

Were last of all the Asgards of Orlig.
And so she sat that evening by the fire,
In the dim parlour panelled with
brown pine,

And nothing seemed to do, and
nothing see,

But all the more she was alert to hear,
As if she listened eager for the coming
Of one who yet came not; she only
heard

The far-off moaning of the restless sea,
The nearer rippling of the lightsome
brook,

The rising breeze that tossed the
brown Scotch pines,

The rooks that cawed, high-cradled
by the breeze,

The creak and slamming of a wicket-
gate,

The barking of a dog in upland farm,
The untimely crowing of a wakeful
cock,

And all the inexplicable sounds that
haunt

Turret and stair and lobbies in old
houses,

When the wind stirs o' nights. And
then she felt

The creeping of an eerie loneliness.

LOQUITUR HESTER

So he is gone, and I am left
Alone, and very lone it is,
To keep the dear old home, bereft
Of all that made it home and bliss,
Of all on earth that I should miss.
I almost fear my heart will break;
And yet it must not, for his sake;

But it is hard to suffer this,
For there's nothing I look on but
makes my heart ache.

It is like living with the dead,
These pictures, and the old arm-chair,
And all I meet when I turn my head
In every room, on every stair;
Their eyes gaze on me everywhere,
And all so silent; yet I seem
At times to hear, as in a dream,
Dear voices calling here and there,
And mocking my heart as I stitch and
seam.

I must not turn a silly maid,
A feather-pated girl, the prey
Of weak nerves and an empty head,
That sighs through all the vacant-day,
And trembles, in the evening grey,
Over a dull dog-eared romance,
To see the stealthy moonbeams glance,
Or hear the wind in crannies play,
Or the mice in the wainscot squeak
and dance.

Why might I not have gone with him?
We ne'er were parted heretofore;
I am as strong of heart and limb:
At worst, I could not suffer more
Than fretting here. Oh, it was sore
To stand upon the windy pier,
And try to wave my hand, and cheer,
With something in my heart's wild core
That surged with rebellion and trouble
and fear.

I deem it barbarous, this way
Of making woman a helpful wife
By keeping us poor girls away
From all the enterprise of life,
Its hardship, and its generous strife.—
All men are Turks at heart, and hold
That sugar plums, and rings of gold,
And pretty silks, and jewels rife
Are all that we need till we're fat and
old.

And yet they want us, ne'ertheless,
To think their thoughts, and
sympathise

With all the struggle and distress
Of souls that would be true and wise,
To laud them when they win the prize,
To cheer them if they strive and fail,
And gird anew their glorious mail,
And then sink back to house-wiferies,
To shirts and flannels, and beef and
ale.

What, if I were to follow him
To that great London? I have tried
To think and write, and I might
swim,

With other minnows, by the side
Of the great fish that keep the
tide.—

A tale, a woman's touch of art,
And insight into woman's heart,
Not deeply thought, but keenly spied,
That were not, surely, too lofty a part.

But it would vex him: and his love
Is more to me than all the world:
There's nothing he dislikes above
A short-haired woman, frizzly, curled,
Her flag for woman's rights unfurled,
Her middle finger black with ink,
Her staring eyes that will not wink,
Like spectacles—a double-barrelled
Terror, he says, to men that think.

So that would never do: beside,
There's plenty of other reasons. He
Would keep the old household by
my side,

And all things as they used to be;
The plants, and stones, and library,
The fossils rare, and etchings nice,
And other things beyond all price:
And there's another might long for
me,

And his evening chess-board, once or
twice.

I'm cold, and yet the night is
warm;

And restless, yet the hour is still;
And haunted by a vague alarm,
Yet all is hopeful, and he will
Surely a glorious fate fulfil.

I dare not doubt it. He is true
To the high aim he has in view,
Intolerant of hoary ill,
But open to all that is good and
new.

The doubts of venturous thoughts
have cast

Uncertain shadows o'er his mind;
His soaring spirit has not passed
Above the realm of clouds, to find
The light serene that lies behind:
But he is pure and undefiled,
Unworldly as a little child,
And still amid the darkness blind,
Clings to the Lowly One, meek and
mild.

He has a scholar's culture, hence
A Greek-like taste, calm, purified;
He has the poet's delicate sense
Of beauty, ever with good allied;
A nature large and free and wide
And plastic and impressible—
Too much perhaps: a stronger will,
A little more of self and pride,
And he would be safer from earthly
ill.

And then he has more sympathy,
Perchance, with truth and beauty
than

The power creative: he would be
A stronger, if a narrower man,
Less balanced; for his equal plan,
Diffused on all sides from his youth,
Unto all wisdom, grace, and truth,
Into most just proportions ran,
With risk of being but graceful and
smooth.

A perfect critic of all good,
 But longing ever to be more :
 Well understanding every mood
 Of genius, finding every door
 Of knowledge open, and the lore
 Of ages to his insight free,
 For he has still the master-key ;
 Yet would he launch out from the shore,
 And plough for himself an untravelled
 sea.

And there is risk that such a mind
 Shall be too nice and delicate,
 And in its equipoise may find
 A very impotence, and wait,
 And never dare a glorious fate,
 The sense of fine perfection still
 Embarrassing the purposed will,
 Until the shadows gather late,
 And the mist is folded about the hill.

Yet if he were not what he is,
 I could not love him then as now :
 It were another mind than his,
 Other, not better then, I trow :
 He hath such courage to avow
 His faiths, such knowledge to impart,
 Such boundless sympathy with Art,
 Such fancies, like the blossomed bough
 That clasps the fruit in its fragrant heart.

Then he is brave and beautiful
 In manhood, radiant with the might
 Of that rich life and grace which rule
 The admiration and delight
 Of Fashion—witty, airy, bright :
 I dread for him a woman's wiles,
 And cunning arts, and winsome smiles,
 And trifling with the heart and right,
 Tangling his love in her loveless toils.

I would not have him not to love
 Another, dearer life than mine :
 Let but a maiden worthy prove,
 And with his love my love shall twine
 To clothe her with a joy divine.

But he esteems all women pure,
 Can spy no craft in looks demure,
 Holds them all angels good that pine
 For heaven in a world they strive to cure,

And so I fear for him ; I dread
 That he may set his love on one
 With little either of heart or head
 Save what he dowers her with, and run
 After a shadow in the sun,
 Only to learn his weary fate
 When the great heart is desolate,
 And the fire burns, and there is none
 Cometh to cheer him early or late.

And once I feared that he had placed
 His all on such a chance. And she—
 The grand, fine lady, scarcely graced
 With outsides of hypocrisy—
 True to the flesh she seemed to be :
 And yet he made a god of her,
 And girt her with an atmosphere
 Of incense, light, and poesie—
 But the glory was all in the worshipper.

'Tis strange, the finest insight still
 Seems blindest to a woman's art.
 The base get love unto their fill ;
 The noble thirst for that true heart
 Where to they may their life impart,
 And find in it their solace meet :
 But clothing with their fancies sweet
 A wanton or a fool, they start
 To know in their love but their sorrow
 complete.

Out of the world he lives afar
 In chivalrous ideal trust,
 Enshrining woman like a star
 For worship of the good and just,
 Where no unworthy thought or lust
 May enter with unhallowed tread ;
 And though he has a sister made,
 Like other girls, of sorry dust,
 He never would see that our gold was
 but lead.

Oh if men knew us only—knew
 The cowardice and common-place,
 The petty circle of our view,
 The meanness and the littleness
 That lie behind a pretty face !
 Thank heaven, I was not bred with
 girls,
 A thing of ribbons, scents and curls,
 And quaint in fancies of a dress,
 And gold and jewels and strings of
 pearls.

Our mother trained me up with him
 To love the right, the truth to speak,
 The scholar's thoughtful lamp to trim,
 And trace the rhythm of numbered
 Greek,
 And in the world of God to seek
 Wisdom in knowledge of His ways,
 And gladness in the song of praise
 Which rises from the strong and
 weak
 To the Father that keepeth us all our
 days.

And this, at least, I've learnt, that
 man
 Can be more godlike far than we,
 And never is more glorious than
 When bending low a suppliant knee
 In his pure-hearted chivalry,
 Entranced with his own spell of might,
 Blind with his own exuberant light,
 Lost in love's rapture and ecstasy,
 Which girls only trifle with, day and
 night.

Therefore I fear his life may be
 A disenchantment day by day,
 A glory that he seems to see,
 Only to see it fade away :
 And then perchance he may not play
 The great part that he would in life,
 But waste him in a petty strife
 With little cares, and be the prey
 Of fretful thoughts, and a foolish wife.

Then will he die, and leave no trace
 Of all the great work he has schemed ;
 And men will say for such a race
 He had not trained, but only dreamed ;
 And that pure light of heaven which
 streamed
 Along his morning pilgrimage,
 Broadening and brightening every stage,
 No forecast true shall be esteemed
 Of the battle which genius has to
 wage.

Hence, idle fear ! He's brave and
 true,
 With patient toil as well as fire ;
 What fruitful effort can, he'll do
 To crown with triumph high desire,
 And make the wondering world admire,
 And win himself a lofty name.—
 Yet what were all the pride of Fame
 If he were linked in bondage dire
 To a heartless flirt, or a haughty
 dame !

The Herr Professor says I'm not
 Just to the croqueting, crocheting kind
 Of girls ; for they fulfil their lot
 Like flowers which want no subtle
 mind,
 But waft their sweetness on the wind,
 And flash their beauty on the eye,
 And bloom, and ripen, and then die ;
 And they are lovely, and we are blind
 If we think that the world is not better
 thereby.

Maybe I am not just to them ;
 Maybe I ask more mind and heart ;
 Maybe a woman, like a gem,
 Is but a bauble of precious art,
 And as a toy should play her part.
 God meant her for an help-meet true,
 But men have quite another view :
 Let her bright eyes like diamonds dart,
 And she may be hard as the diamond
 too.

Yet one may harden, he avers,
By thought as well as thoughtlessness ;
And women's minds may equal theirs,
Have wit as keen, nor reason less ;
Only they will not bear the stress
Of manly toil, and keep the good
Pure quality of womanhood :
And logic is not more than dress
For the sweetening of life in its weary
mood.

The Herr Professor speaks indeed
Many odd quips and crusty jokes.
He vows that I have too much creed
To have much faith ; and daily
shocks
My thought with some mad paradox :
And in the ancient truth he sees
But an old bunch of rusty keys,
Hung at the belt of the Orthodox,
To open a dungeon which they call
Peace.

And yet I know he loveth much,*
And walks with God in truth and
right ;
And if the world had many such,
It were indeed a world of light,
All radiant with a glory bright :
And sometimes, in his quaintest words,
He seems to touch the deepest chords,
And with a master's skill and might
Holds high discourse of the Lord of
Lords.

But, psha ! what matters what he
thinks ?
And yet why do my thoughts still
veer,
As drawn to him by subtle links
Of yearning hope, and trembling fear
How in his sight I shall appear ?
And wherefore do I watch for him
In the elm-tree walk at evening dim,
As he comes singing loud and clear
A Burschen song, or a Luther hymn ?

Can this be love ? and could I charge
Thorold that he would by-and-by
Love with a love more deep and large
Than sister's love could satisfy ?
And all the while, alas ! was I
But taxing him to hide my own
Lapse into passionate depths unknown ?
Nay, but this foolish thought would die
If I were not left here brooding alone.

And yet I know not. Heretofore
I used to bring my thoughts to book,
And opened every chamber door,
And searched my soul through every
nook ;
But into this I shrank to look :
It came with silent, owly flight
In the still quiet of the night ;
I heard the wind, I heard the brook,
But the love slid into my soul like light.

And when I found it nestling there,
Like swallow twittering in the eaves,
It felt like summer warm and fair,
And blossomy spray, and fragrant
leaves.

A cosy nest my bright bird weaves—
My bird which is but a German
swallow,
Guttural-speaking, big and sallow :
Only his heart with great thought
heaves,
And there's nought in him little or
poor or shallow.

Am I ashamed to say I love,
Yet proud of him I love so well ?
O strange proud shame ? yet hand
and glove
Could fit no better, truth to tell.
I used to laugh at girls who fell
Blushing and lying time about,
And sware I would love out and out,
Or not at all ; yet now the spell
Holds me in transport and terror and
doubt.

What can it mean, this love and fear,
 This open shame and secret pride,
 The yearning gladness, and the tear
 That comes so often by its side ;
 This thought we fondle while we hide,
 This trembling dread when he is late,
 And pouting joy that makes him wait,
 And passion passionately denied,
 And the feeling of overmastering
 Fate ?

I will to Thorold's room. Nay,
 that

I may not. Last night I went there,
 And the pale moon in silence sat
 So ghostly on the great arm-chair,
 And the mice pattered here and there,
 And the wind in the chimney moaned,
 And the old pine at the window
 groaned,
 And something stepped the creaking
 stair.—

I dare not sit in the room he owned.

Come back, come back, my brother
 dear :

The storm is gathering on thy way,
 And mine is no more calm and clear ;
 The mist is creeping dull and gray
 O'er surfy beach, and troubled bay,
 And I am friendless and alone,
 And doubtful of myself, with none
 To counsel me ; and day by day
 Fear is chilling my heart like stone.

Am I grown fanciful, to muse
 On school-girl whimsies foolishly ?
 What should I fear, except to lose
 The great true heart that loveth me
 Better than I deserve to be,
 With tender strength, and manly care,
 And modest hope his lot to share,
 And share his thoughts, too, high
 and free,
 And bear all the burden which he
 must bear ?

To mine own soul let me be true ;
 I love my love by night and day,
 I love my love—the sound is new,
 But oh how sweet it is to say !
 I love my love—it is like play,
 But yet I love with heart and mind,
 And passion trembling, fond and
 blind ;
 I love my love in Love's old way,
 And ever in loving new life I find.

I cannot rest ; he cometh not ;
 And yet, a little while ago,
 What wildest fancy could have
 thought
 A day of tumult and of woe
 Among the peoples, stricken low,
 Who rose up in a wrath divine,
 On Seine, the Danube, and the
 Rhine,
 Would shoot, in that volcanic glow,
 A flame from their heart to kindle
 mine ?

I should as soon have looked to see
 Some bright star from the stormy
 heaven,
 Glide down to earth, and rest on me,
 From all its glorious comrades riven.
 So strangely fates are interwoven !—
 And how he loves his Deutsch-land
 dear,
 Its patient thought, that knows no
 fear,
 Its Luther, Goethe, Heine, given
 For lights to the ages far and near.

I will go forth. The moonlight dim,
 Dusks with broad shade the silent hill ;
 I will go up, and think of him,
 Where the old brook is tinkling still,
 With memories of our water mill ;—
 I think he sometimes strolls that way,
 With pipe and book at evening gray ;
 But memories of childhood will
 Pleasantly wind up a weary day.

BOOK THIRD

EDITORIAL

LADY Anne Dewhurst on a crimson couch
 Lay, with a rug of sable o'er her knees,
 In a bright boudoir in Belgravia ;
 Most perfectly arrayed in shapely robe
 Of sumptuous satin, lit up here and there
 With scarlet touches, and with costly lace
 Nice-fingered maidens knotted in
 Brabant :
 And all around her spread magnificence
 Of bronzes, Sevres vases, marquetric, Rare buhl, and bric-à-brac of every kind,
 From Rome and Paris and the centuries
 Of far-off beauty. All of goodly colour,
 Or graceful form that could delight the eye,
 In orderly disorder lay around,
 And flowers with perfume scented the warm air.

Stately and large and beautiful she was
 Spite of her sixty summers, with an eye
 Trained to soft languors, that could also flash,
 Keen as a sword and sharp—a black bright eye,
 Deep sunk beneath an arch of jet. She had
 A weary look, and yet the weariness
 Seemed not so native as the worldliness
 Which blended with it. Weary and worldly, she
 Had quite resigned herself to misery
 In this sad vale of tears, but fully meant

To nurse her sorrow in a sumptuous fashion,
 And make it an expensive luxury ;
 For nothing she esteemed that nothing cost.

Beside her, on a table round, inlaid
 With precious stones by Roman art designed,

Lay phials, scents, a novel and a Bible,
 A pill box, and a wine glass, and a book

On the Apocalypse ; for she was much
 Addicted unto physic and religion,
 And her physician had prescribed for her

Jellies and wines and cheerful Literature.

The book on the Apocalypse was writ
 By her chosen pastor, and she took the novel

With the dry sherry, and the pills prescribed.

A gorgeous, pious, comfortable life
 Of misery she lived ; and all the sins
 Of all her house, and all the nation's sins,

And all shortcomings of the Church and State,

And all the sins of all the world beside,
 Bore as her special cross, confessing them

Vicariously day by day, and then
 She comforted her heart, which needed it,

With bric-à-brac and jelly and old wine.

Beside the fire, her elbow on the mantel,
 And forehead resting on her finger-tips,
 Shading a face where sometimes loomed a frown,

And sometimes flashed a gleam of bitter scorn,

Her daughter stood ; no more a graceful girl,

But in the glory of her womanhood,
Stately and haughty. One who might
have been

A noble woman in a nobler world,
But now was only woman of her world,
With just enough of better thought to
know

It was not noble, and despise it all,
And most herself for making it her all.
A woman, complex, intricate, involved;
Wrestling with self, yet still by self
subdued;

Scorning herself for being what she
was,

And yet unable to be that she would;
Uneasy with the sense of possible good
Never attained, nor sought, except in
fits

Ending in failures; conscious, too, of
power

Which found no purpose to direct its
force,

And so came back upon herself, and
grew

An inward fret. The caged bird
sometimes dashed

Against the wires, and sometimes sat
and pined,

But mainly pecked her sugar, and eyed
her glass,

And trilled her graver thoughts away
in song.

Mother and daughter—yet a childless
mother,

And motherless her daughter; for the
world

Had gashed a chasm between, impass-
able,

And they had nought in common,
neither love,

Nor hate, nor anything except a name.
Yet both were of the world; and she
not least

Whose world was the religious one,
and stretched

A kind of isthmus 'tween the Devil
and God,

A slimy, oozy mud, where mandrakes
grew,

Ghastly, with intertwisted roots, and
things

Amphibious haunted, and the leathern
bat

Flickered about its twilight evermore.

LOQUITUR MATER DOMINA

So, there you are at last. Please draw
That odious curtain, will you? Do.

A hideous thing as e'er I saw!

It gives one such a corpse-like hue.

But I might be a corpse for you:

It's little any of you cares

How your heart-broken mother fares,

Burdened with sorrows old and new,

As the world entangles you all in its
snares.

Please, no excuse: it does no good.

Of course, you have your morning
calls,

Your shopping, and your listless mood

After late dinners, drums, and balls;

My world is these four dreary walls,

My body, but an aching back,

My life, a torture on the rack,

My thoughts, like dizzying water-falls

That never will silence, or change, or
slack.

I get my jellies, soups, and stews,

My little wine—what need I more?

My morning paper with the news

That everybody knew before.

I hear the street calls, and the roar

Of the town traffic, and the clash

Of milk-bells, and the angry crash

Of brass bands, and the drowsy snore

Of an organ as dull as the flat sea-
wash.

And then the night falls, and the clock
 Ticks on the mantel, and the wheels
 Crunch the hard gravel, as the flock
 Of weary revellers homeward reels,
 Until the opal morning steals
 Up in the sky. So, day by day,
 My life crawls on its weary way;
 No hope it stirs, no joy it feels;
 But it's all like a foggy November day:

A grey fog in the early prime,
 A blue fog by the breakfast hour,
 A saffron fog at luncheon time,
 At dinner a persistent shower
 Of smut, and then a dismal power
 Of choking darkness and despair
 Thickening and soddening all the air:—
 But we are all a fading flower,
 And life is a burden of sorrow and care.

I don't complain; it is the lot
 Appointed me by wisdom best:
 'Tis meet that I should be forgot
 By all of you, and learn to rest
 Content, while ye have mirth and jest,
 And I religion. Still I feel;
 I hide the wounds I cannot heal,
 I keep my sorrow unexpressed—
 But I'm not quite so hard as a lump
 of steel.

My nerves are not just wires and cords,
 I'm not a mere rhinoceros
 Where arrows stick as in deal boards,
 And bullets fall as soft as moss.
 My patient heart can bear its cross,
 And bleed unseen—but yet it bleeds,
 And all the more that no one heeds,
 And all the more to see your loss
 Of sound evangelical views and creeds.

Oh, were I only dead and gone!
 It's hard to live, and see the way
 That all of you are hurrying on
 Blindly unto the dreadful day.
 You prate of fossils, while I pray,

And beetles occupy your heart
 More than your own Immortal part:
 Your father's hairs are turning grey,
 In this impious babble of science and
 art.

Poor fools! that fain would break a
 spear
 With Moses and the Pentateuch,
 And only blinded reason hear,
 And will no revelation brook,
 Nor miracle nor inspired Book!
 But for some sweet refreshing showers
 Of doctrine, during Sabbath hours,
 'T would break my heart on you to look;
 But the Book and Day are still
 happily ours.

Ah! what were life without the Book?
 And what this world without its story?
 And what were man if he forsook
 The Sabbath, foretaste of Heaven's
 glory!
 A den of wild beasts, dark and gory!
 A being quite devoid of grace,
 A heathen with a tattooed face,
 That burns his widows! I implore you,
 Set your heart, Rose, in the proper
 place.

But you have no religion—none.
 It is the heart that's wrong, my dear:
 If you had not a heart of stone,
 You could not leave me lonely here.—
 And men may do, who have not clear
 Decided views; they go about
 The clubs, and hear who's in and out,
 And which is "Favourite" this year,
 And bet, and are dreadfully wicked,
 no doubt.

But women who have lost their Faith
 Are angels who have lost their wings,
 And always have a nasty breath
 Of chemistry, and horrid things
 That go off when a lecturer rings

His bell.—But *they* will not go off ;
They take a mission or a cough ;
For men will marry a fool that sings
Sooner than one that has learnt to
scoff.

You don't believe me : you go in
For science, culture, common-sense,
And think a woman sure to win
Because she knows the why and
whence,

And looks at vermin through a lens :
And yet you've seen a score of girls
With empty heads and silly curls,
And laughter light, and judgment
dense,
Wedded to Marquises, Dukes, and
Earls.

And why? They started fair with
you :

You dressed as well—for that was
mine ;

You were as handsome and well-born,
too,

And you had wit like sparkling wine :
But they all took to things divine
Like sober, pious girls. I know
That some were High Church, and
would go,

Like nuns, with beads and crosses
fine—

But they all were wives in a season or so.

Men may be bad, but still they like
A pious wife that lives for heaven ;
Your wit may shine, your beauty
strike,

But not to these their love is given.

Ah ! had you with your prayer-book
driven

To church, and kept a Sunday-school,
And visited, and lived by rule—

But that is past and all forgiven,
Though you played your cards like a
perfect fool.

You cannot be a hypocrite,
To mumble out a false remorse,
And wear a look of prim conceit
Only to be the winning horse ?—
Of course, you cannot, and of course
I never meant you should. But yet,
You might feel true grief and regret
For sin ; and could be none the worse
For the strawberry leaves in a coronet.

You wonder at me, with my views
Of doctrine sound, and worship pure,
That I should plead the least excuse
For girls whom Romish arts allure,
Through Ritualism to Babylon sure.
But did I say their views were right ?
Or did I call their darkness light ?
Or did I only try to cure
Your heart, which is turned from the
Gospel quite ?

It's grace you need, Rose, to illume
Your darken'd nature. What an age
Since I have seen you in my room !
Though I have nothing to engage
My thoughts, except the sacred page,
And that sweet book which is so
clear

Upon the Beast and his numbered
year :—

Yet all the while there's quite a rage
For some wonderful May-fair novel, I
hear.

And after all I have done for you !—
But daughters are not what they
were,

And you are only proving true
What all the Prophets do aver.

Oh had you heard our minister
Upon The Signs of the End, and
how

The children of the saints shall grow
Still wickeder and wickeder !—

Till all to the Beast and the Woman
shall bow.

That is the worst part of my trial :
But prophecy must be fulfilled,
And we are in the Seventh Vial,
The Witnesses will soon be killed,
And all the land with blood be filled
And Papists ; and a cruel fate
Shall separate the Church and State,
And then more blood is to be spilled
By the Frogs,—that's your Radical
friends of late.

It's clear the Woman and the Beast
Are Buonaparté and the Pope ;
The Prophets won't explain the least
Without them ; they're the merest rope
Of sand in that case : and I hope
I know my Bible. Still the Book
Is sealed, and you shall vainly look
To find its meaning and its scope,
If the Jews don't return, and the
Pentateuch.

Ah, we had such a sermon on it !—
The Vicar's wife she was not there ;
She had not got her new spring
bonnet—

But all the world was. Do you care
For the new mode ? You blondes
must wear
Pink, shaped like tiny little shells ;
So natural ! with silver bells.—
But that great sermon ! I declare,
I can't for the world think of anything
else.

So searching and pathetic ! He
Soaked two clean handkerchiefs in tears,
While clearing up the prophecy,
The mystic number, and the years,
And Daniel : and it still appears
That this Napoleon is the Beast
That was and wasn't, you know ; at
least
The Armageddon swords and spears
Were long ago shipped from Mar-
seilles to the East.

Nay, tell me not you do not care
Although the end of the world were
come.

It's very wicked to despair ;
You should be gentle, patient, dumb,
Thinking that any day the hum
Of myriad angels, leading saintly
crowds,
With rainbow trimmings round their
shrouds,

May greet you at a kettle-drum,
Coming in glory among the clouds.

We live in wondrous times ; such
times

The world has never seen before ;
With earthquakes in the tropic climes,
And kingdoms shaken to the core,
And revolutions at our door ;
And Kings and Queens discrowned
appear

In London every other year,
While Barons clothed in rags implore
You to buy pens and sealing-wax,
dreadful dear.

And Ritualists our Church defile,
And Rationalists our faith deny,
And Papist nuns and chaplains wile
Our very thieves in gaol. And I
Went to a chapel once hard by,
And heard a Nonconformist say
The Sabbath was a mere Jewish day !
I left, of course, and had to fly
In the rain, but I hailed a cab by the
way.

And there's your "Robertson of
Brighton,"

He's lying now on every table,
With *Ecce Homo* to enlighten
Our carnal hearts, and minds unstable.
We have no anchor now or cable ;
Our admirable Liturgy,
Our very Bible is not free
From criticism lamentable ;
And everybody is all at sea.

What next? The land is rotten quite,
And infidel and Papist too:
There's Gladstone ruled by Mr.

Bright,
The very Bishops hardly true,
And the Queen knows not what to do.
But prophecy is coming clear,
The awful end is drawing near,
And bitterly this land will rue
The way it has treated the Jews, I fear.

Last week our Vicar plainly told—
He's a converted Jew, I know—
How seven fine ladies should lay hold
Even on the man that cries "Old
Clo',"

To save them in the day of woe;
And proved it from the Prophets clear.
So then I thought I'd ask you, dear,—
The poor man looked so shabby and
low—

If you knew any Jew of the better
class here.

For though all Israel shall be saved,
And all the lost tribes found again,
And all be proper and well-behaved,
And all be free from sorrow and pain;
Yet even in heaven it is quite plain,
As stars with different glory shine,
There shall be people poor and fine,
For perfect order there shall reign:
And one would not like to go over
the line.

You did not come to speak of Jews—
They're Charlie's friends, and he can
tell;

Nor yet about the Vicar's views
Of millenarian heaven or hell:—
My dear, that's hardly spoken well.
But what, then, did you come about?
A call, a lecture, or a rout?
A flower, a beetle, or a shell?
Or a prodigy found in some country
lout?

Eh! What say you? That puling boy
With the Scotch brogue and hungry
look?

Your genius whom you made a toy
Last winter at your drums, and took
About with you by hook or crook!
Tush, tush! I do not like your set;
But what's come of the baronet?
As for the writer of a book,
You're not come quite to the curates yet.

Oh yes, you love him; that's of
course:—

It's your fifth season, isn't it, dear?
But really you are little worse:—
And I am sure you loved last year,
Sir Wilfred with his rent-roll clear.—
A person at St. John's Wood?
Shame!

No proper girl should ever name
A person there or person here;
And, no doubt, she is the one to blame.

They always are, these creatures. Ah!
This wicked world we're living in!
There should be some severer law
For low-born creatures who would win
Youth over to the ways of sin.
But there's that shameful act which
freese
Their vice from want and from
disease,
Although they neither toil nor spin,—
Right in the face of all heaven's
decrees.

It's shameful, shocking; quite enough
To bring down on us wrath divine;
I don't care for their facts and stuff,
I won't believe a single line.
I know it's sin. And I opine
Gladstone our morals means to sap
And then, his wickedness to cap,
The House of Lords he'll undermine
And bring in the Pope like a thunder-
clap.

All men are dreadful wicked. Sad
It is to say it ; but it's true ;
You hardly would believe how bad ;
So bad that it would never do
If girls before their marriage knew.
And if you will be prude and nice,
And yet go poking into vice,
And shying when it comes in view,
You will never be married at any price.

Now, hear me, Rose : give up at once
Your silly fancy for this boy
Whom you have led an idle dance,
I daresay, only to annoy
Sir Wilfred ; and for once employ
The arts that others use for sin
His erring heart again to win
Back to a purer life and joy,
Which you're certain to do if you'll
just begin.

Be patient now ; leave all to me ;
Don't fly off in a girlish huff.
You'll need a new dress—let me see—
Of some soft, lustrous, dainty stuff ;
Made Christian-like and low enough—
You did not get a bust like this
To hide like some raw country miss—
Say poplin of a delicate buff ;
With Honiton lace, for a taste like his ;

You never yet knew how to dress,
You never have a gown to fit,
Your things are always in a mess
That's shocking, even to look at it ;
Your colours somehow never hit,
They never match themselves nor you ;
They're always out of fashion too ;
And as for gloves, you must admit
They're just the one thing that you
cannot do.

Anyhow, leave all that to me.
Could I but see you settled well,
As, sure, my daughter ought to be,
I'd die in peace unspeakable.
Why am I here ? why do I dwell

In this unhappy world ? unless,
To help my children, and express
Undying faith in principle—
Though I don't like your baronet's
quite, I confess.

He wants to open the Museum
Upon the blessed Sabbath-day ;
He wants the bands to play "Te
Deum"

When we should go to church and
pray ;
It will be masses next, I say ;—
His views of sin are far from sound,
Eternal punishment, I found,
He will not hear of ; and his way
Is altogether on dangerous ground.

But then, woe's me ! you're all the
same ;

All turned from Bible-teaching quite,
All snared in folly, sin, and shame,
And blinded to the only light.
And he at least is of the right
Old blood, and has an income nice,
And never touches cards or dice
Or horses. It's a happy sight,
A man of his rank with a single vice.

It's wonderful, most wonderful,
The times we're living in ! And yet
We're born, and christened, and go to
school,
And marry Lord or Baronet,
And dress and dine, and vex and fret,
And strive the tide of Fate to stem
Which Prophets had revealed to
them,
And never think the times are set
For the Jews going back to Jerusalem.

The Prophets say that there shall be
A Highway and a Way : we read
Also of ships upon the sea,
Made of bulrushes ; and we need,
Unless you think I'm blind indeed,

Unless I'm blinder than a bat,
No prophet to interpret that,
With a steam-boat running at full speed
On the Suez Canal, like a water-rat.

There could not be a clearer sign
That now the end draws near in view,
And that it's Providence' design
To bring deliverance to the Jew,
And break their bonds.—Now, shame
on you!

To scoff with your unhallowed wit;
There's almost blasphemy in it:—
I don't mean bonds of I.O.U.,
Such as Charlie gives when he's badly
hit.

But wherefore speak of things like
these

To things like you, who heed no
more

The murmur of prophetic breeze
Than creaking of a rusty door?
You walk along the solemn shore
Washed by the tide of awful doom,
While lights and shadows flash and
gloom

And neither wonder nor adore,
But stamp and "pshaw" through the
drawing-room.

BOOK FOURTH

EDITORIAL

I WILL not answer for my wife's
reports;

Quite true, no doubt, in the main, as
true at least

As the most excellent women can
report

People they don't much like; not
meant to bear

Lawyer's cross-questioning, which they
detest

With a good conscience, conscious
that they speak

True to the idea, if the facts hang loose
At one point, at another have been
joined

Ingeniously. Men are so troublesome!
Rose was not faultless, as her lovers
swore,

Nor yet so faulty as my Hester
thought:

Women judge women hardly; hit
perchance

The likeness true enough by instinct
keen

That, piecing trivial incidents, detects
The soul of character; but they have
no shading,

No softening tints, no generous
allowance

For circumstance, to make the picture
human,

And true because so human. Rose
was human;

And for a woman born of such a
mother,

And for a woman reared in such a
world,

And for a woman dowered with
queenly beauty

Set out for sale, and buzzed by
flatterers

All her life long, was even womanly,
And better truly than she might have
been.

So stately as she left my lady's chamber,
Her full eyes flashing scorn, yet with
her scorn

Contending to retain a mother still,
If no more shrined in natural reverence,
Yet cloaked with charity. But in the
hall

Her heart failed, and she pressed her
forehead flushed

On the cold fluting of a marble pillar,
And wept to feel her life so desolate,

And wept still more because the world
 had made it
 So desolate, yet was the world her all;
 She loathed it, but she knew it was
 her all.
 Thus she with passionate rebellion wept,
 Printing the fluted pillar on her brow,
 And then with weary, lifeless steps
 she went
 Heavily to her father's chamber door.

The Squire was banished to a little room
 That overlooked a paved court and a
 mews.
 A small, close chamber, lined with
 dusty books
 And dingy maps; and savage crania
 Grinned from high shelves, with clubs
 and arrow-heads
 And tools of flint, and shields of hide
 embossed.
 There were great cobwebs on the
 windows dim,
 Where bloated spiders watched their
 webs, and heard
 The blue-fly knock his head against
 the pane,
 And buzz about their snares. And
 through the room,
 On table and chair, were globes and
 glasses tall,
 Retorts and crucibles, electric jars
 And batteries, and microscopes and
 prisms
 And balances, and fossil plants and
 shells,
 Disorderly and dusty; and the floor
 Was carpeted with papers and thick-
 dust,—
 Papers and books and instruments and
 dust.

A grey old man sat in that dim grey
 room
 Wrapt in a dressing-gown of soft grey
 stuff,

And puzzling o'er a paper wearily
 Of circles, squares and pentagons, and
 lines
 Of logarithms, he strove to disentangle.
 He was a little, brisk, bald-headed man,
 With fiery eyes, and forehead narrow
 and high
 And far-retiring: one who could have
 led
 A regiment to the belching cannon's
 mouth
 If wisely ordered when; or might
 have headed
 The cheery hunt across the stubble field,
 Taking the fences gallantly, nor turn-
 ing
 From the wide brook to seek the safer
 ford.
 But being held in London half the
 year,
 And with no taste for politics or
 fashion,
 Or such religion as he came across,
 He took to Science, made experi-
 ments,
 Bought many nice and costly instru-
 ments,
 Heard lectures, and believed he under-
 stood
 Beetle-browed Science wrestling with
 the fact
 To find its meaning clear; but all in
 vain.
 He thought he thought, and yet he
 did not think,
 But only echoed still the common
 thought,
 As might an empty room. The fore-
 head high
 And fiery eye had no reflexion in them
 To brood and hatch the secret of the
 world.
 He could but skim and dip, like rest-
 less swallow
 Fly-catching on the surface of all
 knowledge

Anthropologic and Botanical
 And Chemical, and what was last set
 forth
 By charlatan to stun the vulgar sense.
 But yet a strain of noble chivalry
 Ran through his nature, and a faint
 crisp humour
 Rippled his thought, and would have
 been a joy
 Had life been kindlier ; but his cheer-
 iest smile
 Verged on a sneer, and ran to mocking
 laughter.
 Yet under all his pottering at science,
 And deeper than his feeble cynic sneer,
 Lay a great love, to which he fondly
 clung,
 For Rose, the stately daughter of his
 house.

LOQUITUR PATER

I WILL not hear of it. No more ;
 Besides, I'm busy, as I said ;
 You come and knock, knock at my
 door,
 And drive all thought clean from my
 head,
 Just when at last I've caught the thread,
 Subtle and brittle and sought-for long,
 That would most surely bind a throng
 Of facts together, firmly wed
 By doctrine of Science clear and
 strong.

I labour and experiment,
 I methodise and meditate,
 I watch the bias and the bent
 Of the mind's idols. Still I wait
 And verify and speculate,
 When rat-tat-tat ! my mind's a blank ;
 My thread of thought, a tangled hank ;
 My ordered facts, confusion great ;—
 And it's always you women I have to
 thank.

You've heard of Newton's dog that
 spoiled
 The calculations of long years,
 And of that brutish maid whose soiled
 And sooty fingers used the tears
 Of genius and its hopes and fears,
 Page after page, to light her fire—
 A horrible and impious pyre !
 So all my laboured thought appears
 To melt, like the snow, into slush and
 mire.

I say it's worse than Suttee, or
 The sacrifice of beautiful youth,
 This waste of thought long-awaited for,
 This fruitless birth of still-born truth.
 What matters for the silly, smooth,
 Meaningless face of widow trim,
 Slow roasting to a drowsy hymn ?
 But you do rob the world in sooth,
 When the lights of Science are
 quenched or dim.

Is't not enough to have your maids
 Scrubbing and brooming at my door,
 With whispers shrill, and sudden raids
 On cobwebs that have taught me more
 Wisdom and beauty, than a score
 Of chattering girls ? Only last night
 I found my favourite beetle quite
 Crushed and mangled upon the floor ;
 And the jade held to it she did quite
 right.

A plague on maids ! and him who
 first
 Invented them ! They're all the same.
 I've tried them saucy, tried them
 curst,
 I've tried them sluts, and tried to tame
 Their natural instincts, and to shame
 Their ignorance, and to abate
 Their furious and unfeeling hate
 Of fellow-creatures ; but my claim
 Was vain as appeal to the wheels of
 Fate.

Whate'er they do not understand
Is dirt, and must be brushed away ;
They'd broom all science from the land
And scour from heaven the Milky
Way.

I plan by night, I work by day
With chemic and electric Force,
And tremble as I watch the course
Of Nature ; all in vain, for they
Baffle in some way my best resource.

And now you come, like all the rest,
My daughter, but a woman still,
My daughter, whom I thought the best
Of possible daughters, trained with
skill,

And schooled in Science to fulfil
The part of Cuvier's daughter true ;
And when I hope and trust in you,
You fall in love, and coo and bill,
And want to know what I mean
to do.

Of course, the fellow came to me,
And talked of marriage, love, and
trash,

As if he thought I did not see
He meant just settlements and cash.
But there's my banker gone to smash,
Shares fallen to nothing, farmers' rents
Begged off, and half my Three per
Cents

Gone to save Charlie from a smash ;
And where is the money for
settlements ?

O yes ! He did not care for that,
He did not woo you for your gold,
He wished for nothing, cared not what
You brought or did not bring him ; told
His means and prospects, and was bold
To think that love like his and yours,
Would work miraculous works and
cures,

Keep you from hunger, debt, and cold,
And all the evils that man endures.

The old story, Rose ; the silly stuff
Of fools and beggars superfine !
Why ! he has hardly means enough
To keep you in gloves and flowers
and wine.

You could not dress, you could not
dine,

You could not keep a maid or horse,
Or drive but in a cab, or worse ;—
The man's a fool ; no child of mine
Could marry a beggar like him, of
course.

I marvel at his impudence ;
A fellow with some paltry three
Hundred a-year ! A grain of sense—
But that he hasn't—had made him see
The silliness of plaguing me.
His genius and his prospects ! Well ;
Can you eat prospects ? Will they sell ?
And will his trumpery genius be
A dinner, or only a dinner-bell ?

There there ; don't cry : I do not
mean

He is not all that you would say—
A handsome fellow, as I've seen,
And true and modest in his way :
And it is hard to say you nay ;
Yet why should your old father lose
His one ewe-lamb ? Why, should he
choose

To steal my only joy away,
Since Charlie went to the dogs and
Jews ?

And that reminds me, Charlie says
Your friend's a screw, and awful close :
But then he's poor, and no doubt pays
His way, which Charlie never does.
That makes a difference, for those
May freely give and lend, whose purse
Is shut to all their creditors.

I wish I knew their secret, Rose,
How never to pay, and be never the
worse.

Well, yes ; I liked him, as you say,
And praised him to my friends ; and
he

May wed their daughters any day
He likes,—that's no concern to me.
But this I could not bear to see,
My Rose stuck in his button-hole,
And shunned, like any stained soul,
By a world that hates all poverty—
And the world is perfectly right, on
the whole.

But tush ! with marriage and affiance ;
The Medium waits me at the door,
That Pythoness of modern science,
Who brings back Intellect once more
To hear and wonder and adore.
She photographed by electric light
My old Grandmother's ghost last
night,
The very cap and wig she wore,
While the spirit sat by me there bolt
upright.

I did not see Her ; but I saw
The portrait like as like could be,
And felt a kind of creeping awe,
And old religion back in me ;
A hand was laid upon my knee,
And there was music in the air,
The very song she whiled my care
Away with in my infancy ;
And she lives in some kind of a sphere
somewhere.

And conscience twitched me, like a
spasm,
For hitherto I had no faith
In anything but protoplasm ;
I held that spirit was but breath,
And all the Future silent death.
And what, if Science shall restore
The faith it robbed me of before ?
For call it spirit, ghost, or wraith,
One was there who did not come in
by the door.

It's wonderful what now we do ;
This is a mighty age indeed,
With march of Intellect so true,
From prejudice and bondage freed,
And pious fraud, and worn-out
creed !

We weigh the farthest stars in scales,
We comprehend the wandering gales,
We summon spirits at our need
From the shadowy world which love
bewails.

I don't deny, that heretofore
The spirits have not much to tell,
That Shakespeare's something of a
bore,
That Milton prosed about Hell,
That Scott has lost his wizard spell,
That Plato has forgot his Greek,
That Byron's dull, and Goethe
weak ;

But then, deal tables could not well
Utter the thoughts *they* might wish to
speak.

We wait for better instruments—
Wind harps to suit the spirit hand,
Sweet lutes to place beside the rents
In the dim walls of the spirit-land.
No Maestro with his cunning wand
Beethoven's symphonies could get
From bones and bagpipes. We are
yet

But groping 'mong the secrets grand
Of the mystic spiritual Alphabet.

At any rate, this is the age
Of miracles proper,—wonders done
By careful reading the dark page
Of Nature, searching one by one
Her secrets till there shall be none.
And he who reads them is the true
Prophet-Apostle of this new
Annus mirabilis, whose sun
Shines its great light now on me
and you.

Wonders of Science ! marvels high,
 Beyond our wildest dream or hope,
 Found in the sunlight and the sky
 By spectroscope and telescope !
 Miracles in a dirty drop
 Of water from a stagnant pool !
 And every lichen'd rock is full
 Of history ; and there's a crop
 Of marvels now in a table or stool !

Now, go to your mother, Rose, she'll
 give
 Excellent counsel in Heaven's name ;
 Right worldly wisdom, as I live,
 And all in pious phrase and frame.
 I wish I knew that little game,
 It is a secret worth the knowing,
 To clothe with Scripture language
 glowing
 The devil's plain common-sense, and
 claim
 The Word of truth for truth's o'er-
 throwing.

What ? You have only come from her ?
 Well, I'm a beast, a perfect brute,
 To fret and fume and stamp and stir
 With fretful word, and angry foot,
 While my poor girl stands still and
 mute,
 With that taste in her mouth, where all
 Nauseous bitters scriptural
 Are mingled by a branch-and-root
 Right Low-church Evangelical.

But come, now, tell me what she said.
 Yet what needs asking that ? Of
 course,
 Her heart was broken, and she prayed
 For "Death" to come on his pale
 horse,
 And all the world was waxing worse ;
 And then she blamed your wicked views
 And touched upon the elected Jews
 Going to Zion back in force—
 And they can't go sooner than I
 would choose.

And still beneath the grieving saint,
 You found the nether millstone hard ;
 She's not a fool, nor given to faint,
 But maundered nonsense by the yard,
 Until she had you off your guard,
 Then lisped soft words that stung you
 sore,
 And hints that maddened you still
 more.
 You bit the peach and for reward
 Cracked your teeth on the stony
 core.

I know it all ; the winding stream
 Of pious babble linked along,
 As loose as some fantastic dream,
 Oblivious of all right and wrong,
 Here swirling round in eddies strong
 'Neath twisted roots of old dead
 thought,
 There slushing among mud and rot,
 And chill as salt and snow among
 The tremblings of feeling highly
 wrought.

Our modern science has not left
 A leg for faith to stand upon ;
 Of all its miracles bereft,
 Its history to myth all gone ;
 Yet would it surely hold its own
 But for that nether millstone bit
 That lieth in the heart of it.
 A little mercy would atone
 For failure of reason, and lack of wit.

She is your mother, and my wife ?
 Well, yes ! and may be I have been
 No wise guide for a troubled life,
 To lead it to the peace serene.
 A brighter girl was never seen ;
 There's none of you who may
 compare,
 A moment, with her beauty rare,
 Her perfect sense, and insight keen.—
 How she headed the hunt on that
 wild black mare !

Ah! well; that's past. And I am
vexed
If I have added to your pain.
I did not mean it. I'm perplexed
With Charlie's gambling debts again.
Do what I will, 'tis all in vain:
He plays to-night, and prays to-
morrow,
Now tries to preach, and now to
borrow
Among the Jews; and then is fain
To come to me when he comes to
sorrow.

Now, kiss me, Rose, and let me go;
And put this business quite away
Out of your thoughts. You surely
know.
'Tis easier far for me to say
A yea to any one than nay;
And yea to thee, was pleasant still,
And nay, against my heart and will;
But it would quench my light of day,
If aught should happen to thee of ill.

Even when you leave me for a home,
Happy and honoured, it will be
The last bright day shall ever come
With sunshine to my home and me;
And the years afterwards will flee
Like drift of dry and barren sand
Along the shore, between the land
And the low moaning of the sea
That creeps with the great mist, hand
in hand.

If you had loved with love supreme,
Which to itself is all in all;
If you were lapt in blissful dream,
Which wakens not at any call,
But still loves on whate'er befall;
If worldly custom, pride, and show,
And all your wonted life might flow
Past you unheeded, and the small
Tattle of fools, like the winds that
blow;

If I could think you loved like this,
And had no half-heart for the world,
If perfect Love were perfect bliss,
Whose spotless flag you had unfurled,
And its serene defiance hurled
At toil, contempt, and hardships
great—
But you have ne'er confronted Fate:
Your love is rosy, scented, curled,
And dreams of a carriage, and man to
wait.

My dear, you know it not; but yet
That is the truth; I've read your
heart:
You are no heroine; you would fret
To play a common, obscure part,
To watch the coming baker's cart,
To tremble at the butcher's bill,
To patch and darn and hem, and still
To make yourself look neat and smart
In a twopenny print and a muslin frill.

There's nothing of the hero, Rose,
In any of us. We could fight,
I daresay, if it came to blows,
Almost like the old Norman knight
Who won our lands—Heaven bless
his might!
We could not win them if we tried—
We can but shoot and fish and ride,
And lightly spend what came so light,
And I don't know we can do ought
beside.

Indeed, you must not think of it.
For us there's nought but common-
place.
A dinner good, a dress to fit,
A ride to hunt, a pretty lace,
Old wine, old china, and old lace:
We can no more. I've tried to
know
Science, but Science will not show
Her secrets to the trifling race
Of Dilettanti, brisk or slow.

You don't like this, you don't like that ;

You don't like horsey-hunting squires,
You don't like parsons sleek and fat,
You don't like those whose only fires
Are the quenched ashes of their sires :

Nor do you love this Thorold so,
That you with him, like Eve, would go

Into a world of thorns and briers,
Glad to be with him in weal or woe.

That is the curse upon us, Rose ;
We cannot dare a noble fate,
And yet our hearts find no repose
In all our empty show and state :
We can be neither small nor great ;
With strong desire and feeble power
We hanker through our weary hour,
Like flowers that try to blossom late,
In a sickly struggle with frost and shower.

Our race is run : the Norman knight
Is distanced by the engineer ;
The cotton-spinner beats us quite
When all the battle is to clear
A hundred thousand pounds a-year :
That is the glory of our age,
Six figures on the Ledger's page—
And no bad glory either, dear,
As glory goes among saint and sage.

Our life is all a poor illusion,
And nothing is that seems to be ;
Our knowledge only breeds confusion,
Our love is moonshine on the sea,
Our faith is but the shadow we
Cast on the cloud that bounds our view ;
And to be virtuous and true
Is trouble, plague, and misery,
If we have not the funds when the bills come due.

BOOK FIFTH

EDITORIAL

DRESSED, like a penitent, in sombre black
That hung about her limp and scrimp,
and all

Without relief of ribbon, lace, or tucker,
Collar, or cuff, or any lightsome thing ;
Her hair, that wont in regal braid to fold
A shining coronet around her brow,
Stuffed loosely in a net ; nor ring nor jewel

Gracing the hand that trembled as it lifted

A book, a pencil, or an ornament,
And could not help but lift them ; so arrayed,

A nun-like woman over all dull and sad,
In tragic dress of studied negligence,
Which covered not the less a tragic pain,—

For there are souls that live in symbolisms,

And are most true in most dramatic seeming,—

Thus Rose awaited for the sacrifice.

She could not rest, but paced about the room ;

Now drawing curtains close, to dim the light ;

Now watching the slow movement of the clock,

Uncertain whether to chide its tardy pace,

Or its unfeeling haste ; now sitting down,
Holding her side, or white, spasm-choking throat ;

And anon starting up to stamp and frown,

With flashing look defiant, saying " I will " ;

But soon she drooped her head, and sobbed, " I cannot ;

God, pity me, a creature pitiful ;
 I dare not say, God help me, for this
 business
 Is one He cannot help in. I am to
 choose
 Deliberately the mean life I have
 proven,
 And knowing it so hollow, heartless,
 vain,
 And knowing, too, the better life of love,
 And knowing it may break a noble
 heart,
 And make mine own a lean and barren
 heart,
 I am to seal a covenant with darkness,
 And sign mine own death-warrant.
 Can I do it ?
 Is there no hope, no other way but this,
 As they all tell me?—how I hate
 them all !
 Why was there none to back my
 better thought,
 And help the struggling spirit to do
 right ?
 O father, mother, brother, why do all
 Forsake me ? ply me so with reasons
 strong
 To play the baser part ? Was ever girl
 So hard beset with preachers of a lie ?
 Was ever girl so drawn by cords of love
 To break the cord of Love ? Or can
 it be,
 As they do all aver, and I myself
 Half feel, yet hate myself for feeling it,
 That this poor world of Custom is my
 Fate ;
 That I must be what yet I scorn to be ;
 That empty as it is, it is my all ;
 That I should only wreck another soul,
 Trying another life ;—that I have lost,
 With their upbringing, simple woman-
 hood
 And patient strength of love ? Too
 late, too late !
 That is his step, his ring. I know
 them well,

As the fond wife her husband's foot-
 fall kens,
 Home-coming while she watches for
 his coming.
 Ah me ! how often I have sat intent
 To hear it, while they thought I
 heeded them
 Dully haw-hawing, which he never did ;
 Stupidly flattering, which he never
 did ;
 Or peddling in the devil's small-ware,
 gossip
 And innuendo, which he never did ;
 For he is gracious, generous, and true :
 And all the time my spirit was not
 here,
 But hovering by the door, and out and
 in,
 And, hungering for him, hated them
 the more.
 And now I shake and shiver like a rush
 To hear the step which I shall hear
 no more.
 No more ! he will not see me any
 more !
 No more ! and I must snap with mine
 own hand
 The gold-thread in my life, and make
 it all
 Leaden and passionless for evermore !
 I hate it all ; I'll do some wicked
 thing,
 I know, ere all is ended. How I
 dread
 The future they have fashioned out
 for me,
 And fierce rebellion of the best in me
 Against the doing what is bound on
 me !
 Heaven help me to be true at least to
 him
 When falsest to myself ; my way is
 hard."
 Then she sat down, and was composed
 and calm
 To look at, as a marble monument.

LOQUITUR ROSE

NAY, sit down there, and touch me not :
 I am not worthy ; and I feel
 In my shamed soul the leprous spot
 Burn in thy presence. I would kneel,
 Or put my neck beneath thy heel,
 If Nature had her way, and youth
 Its old simplicity and truth :
 But the wolf's gnawing we conceal
 'Neath a surface passionless, bland,
 and smooth.

No more ashamed of doing wrong,
 We are ashamed of feeling right,
 Ashamed of any feeling strong,
 And of all shame ashamed quite :
 And I am like the rest ; the light
 Laughter of fools arrests my shame
 And self-contempt and bitter blame :
 So we must meet as if the might
 Of passion and pain were an empty name.

Ah me ! 'tis hard for me to speak,
 And will be hard for you to hear ;
 Yet do not comfort me, nor seek
 To soothe one pang or stay one tear.—
 No fear of that, alas ! no fear ;
 More like to scorn me for the lot
 Which I have chosen ; yet scorn me
 not ;
 I've been so happy, being so dear ;
 Yet I'd rather be hated than quite
 forgot.

I've been so happy, and can be
 No more as I have been again ;
 And my most cherished memory
 Henceforth shall be my keenest pain.
 I have been loved ; that will remain
 The treasured thought of all my prime,
 The treasured grief of all my time ;
 And I have loved, and not in vain,
 Though my Love, in Love's vision,
 was almost crime.

I loved above myself—above
 Mine own capacity of soul,
 As one that with an earthly love
 Seeks Heaven, yet spurns its high
 control.

I did aspire unto the rôle
 Of a great blessedness, unmeet
 For such as me. 'Twas very sweet,
 While the dream lasted round and
 whole,
 But the sorrow of waking is more
 complete.

Yet do not let me wholly pass
 Out of your mind, though I must be
 Apart from your true life, alas !
 And from a meaner level see,
 As one looks where the stars go free,
 Its struggle brave and triumph great,
 For you will strive and conquer Fate :
 And think not bitterly of me
 When you take to your bosom a
 worthier mate.

But let me speak all I must say,
 For I must say it, though my heart
 Protests with an indignant nay !
 And loathes to play the ignoble part.
 Ignoble it is : I have no art
 To picture wrong as it were right ;
 But if I sin I sin outright,
 And know it sin, and know the
 smart
 Will follow as surely as day and
 night.

I hate a sham ; let bad be bad,
 And good be good for evermore :
 Who doeth right, let him be glad,
 Knowing the good he liveth for ;
 Who doeth wrong, let him, too, pour
 Unshrinking light upon his ill,
 And do it with determined will :—
 Our devil clings to his rôle of yore,
 And is fain to play the good angel
 still.

I had a schoolmate once—a girl
 Much like myself, not very good,
 Nor very bad; no precious pearl,
 Or perfect flower of womanhood;
 But one that graced and understood
 Our pleasant, artificial life,
 And would have made a charming
 wife,
 Had she been only gaily wooed
 By a fine red-coat and a drum and
 fife.

But there came one across her way—
 A Priest: a grave, high-thoughted
 man,
 Who did not lag behind his day,
 But bravely dared to lead the van
 Of Progress: with a lofty plan,
 Not counting for himself the price,
 Up the great stair of Sacrifice,
 Trod by the meek and lowly One,
 He would lead our gay world into
 Paradise.

He came across her path, and she
 Caught up his dream, and dreamt
 awhile;
 She came across his path, and he
 Found dreams angelic in her smile;
 He had no knowledge, she no guile:—
 Leave that to satire-novels; both
 But dreamt a happy dream, not loath;
 There was no woman's art or wile
 When she gave to him freely her
 plighted troth.

And for a while she strove to live
 His life, and meekly played her part;
 And for a while she tried to give
 Not service only, but her heart
 To sacred work and thought and art;
 To help the poor, the sick to cheer,
 And breathe sweet love instead of fear
 Into our worship, and impart
 To all men the feeling that God was
 near.

Why do I dwell on this? Because
 'Twas not herself, but he that spoke
 In her. And soon there came a
 pause

In her hot zeal. The spell was broke,
 And once more, her old self awoke
 With yearning for the former days,
 The laughter crisp, the empty praise,
 The dressing, dancing, and the flock
 Of butterflies sunning them in her rays.

Then by and by, in her old place
 We met her; first, a matron meek,
 Come to diffuse a light of grace;
 But for this task she was too weak,
 When guardsmen gathered round to
 seek
 The old smiles, and the banter light,
 And midnight chatter sparkling bright
 With airy bubbles; while a bleak
 Loneliness reigned in her home all
 night.

What would you? There was nothing
 wrong
 In our sense, only flirting gay.
 Meanwhile the grave priest went along,
 With heavy heart, his weary way,
 Heavier-hearted every day,
 Till, as a shield for her good name,
 Weary and dreary he, too, came
 To ball and rout and drum and play;
 And she squandered his life in her
 reckless game.

His vow to cherish her he deemed
 First of all duties binding; so
 The glorious dream which he had
 dreamed
 Of a great battle with sin and woe,
 And dealing them a deadly blow,
 With a brave woman by his side,
 Became a mournful strife to hide
 A broken heart, nor let her know
 How the hope and the light of his life
 had died.

Now, hear me: I too had my
dream,
The which I fondled day and
night,
It shed upon my life the gleam
Of a new world of truth and right;
Nor all in vain, for in its light
I see as I had never seen
Before; I see that life is mean
Without the purpose and the might
Of a noble Faith, and a Hope
serene.

And yet 'tis but a dream with me,
Vague, feeble, and unsolid: I
Am of the world, worldly; I can see;
Admiring still, the vision high,
And feel the sentiment and sigh
Of truer nature in my breast,
Our artificial world confessed
A proven vanity and lie,—
But the owl sees the sunshine and
winks in its nest.

I am not fit to live your life,
I am not meet to share your thought,
I am not able for the strife
Of any high and glorious lot,
I am not worthy to be brought
Into companionship of those
Who heed not custom as it goes,
Who heed not what opinions float,
Who heed but the light that high
Reason throws.

I will not be to you a care,
A burden only changed for death;
I will not be to you a snare,
As she was to the Priest of Faith;
You shall not tremble lest the
breath
Of slander dim a wife's pure name,
And feeling shame deny the shame,
And sadly smiling bear the scaith
Of a nature too shallow to get much
blame.

Nay, think not these are motives good
Framed but to hide the ill I do,
Nor drive me to a bitter mood
When my sore heart would most be
true
And faithful and tender unto you.
I have done wrong, and hide it not,
But yet it was not in my thought;
And bitterly your heart would rue
Blending me with your life and lot.

Therefore my dream I must dispel,
Therefore my love I must refuse;
It was a sweet and tender spell
Of soft enchantment I did use:
I was to blame; I therefore lose
The one great bliss I ever knew,
The false love which yet made me
true,
Bathing me in its cleansing dew
But I know it grew irksome already
to you.

Nay, don't deny it; it was right;
You could not help it; I have seen
Often the anxious, doubtful light
Of those true eyes when I have been
Showing a nature small and mean;
I've watched the shadow of regret,
The pleading look when our looks met,
The pain and fear you fain would
screen,—
And I could not be other, and cannot
yet.

And then, too, though I am not old,
I know my years are more than thine;
And that quaint thing, your sister,
told,
By many an angry look and sign,
That she did more than half divine
That I, in wanton *idlesse*, angled,
And had, with crafty art, entangled
Your love, and strained upon the line,
Nor cared how your heart was torn
and mangled.

Little she knew—but let that pass ;
 Perhaps I played at love ; perhaps
 The game to earnest grew, alas !
 Ere I could mark the gradual lapse.
 The unnoticed tide crept up the gaps,
 And circled us with foaming sea,
 And there was no escape, and we,
 Enforcèd, clasped the love that wràps
 Forgetfulness in its ecstasy.

Yet mine is not a love like thine,
 Which brooks no rival, fears no ill,
 Which time would mellow like old
 wine,
 Which hath no separate end or will,
 And is content with loving still.
 Such life would grow insipid soon
 To me, and tiresome as a tune
 Ground on a barrel-organ, till
 A change were as welcome as flowers
 in June.

It should not, but I know it would ;
 It seems as if some evil spell
 Were on me, holding me from good,
 And from the peace unspeakable ;
 There is that in me like a bell
 Cracked in the belfry, where it swings
 Shaming its office, for it rings,
 For Christmas cheer and passing
 knell,
 The same false note for all truest
 things.

Women are fickle—I am more ;
 Women are contrary—I am worse ;
 Even ficklest women can adore,
 And in adoring gain a force
 Which holds them to a stedfast
 course ;
 But I've no reverence ; mine eyes
 Have only learnt to criticise,
 To find out flaws, and trace their
 source,
 And to weary of folk that are good
 and wise.

I love enough to part with pain,
 But not enough to wed thee poor ;
 I dare not face the way of men
 Who nobly labour and endure,
 Seeking a great life high and pure.
 But I have one true purpose yet ;
 I will not lead thee to forget
 The splendid hope of glory sure,
 Which was all your thought until we
 two met.

Ah ! you will not believe the truth,
 Because it shows me poor and mean ;
 You've dreamt that I am all in sooth,
 Which I have dreamt I might have
 been ;
 And should, perhaps, if I had seen
 In early years the generous life
 Of aspiration high, and strife
 For truth and love and faith serene,
 Which oft you have pictured for you
 and your wife.

But this it was not mine to see ;
 A household ours where Home is
 not,
 We carp and criticise, and we
 Never do anything we ought.
 Ah ! happy was your sister's lot !
 My brother idles, trifles, spends,
 And here he borrows, there he lends,
 And I, like him, have never thought
 Of doing a thing that makes or
 mends.

Yet we must eat and drink and dress,
 And drive in carriages, and ride
 In Rotten Row, and crush and press,
 Bejewelled at St. James's, tied
 Fast to the chariot of our pride,
 Have spacious rooms, and sumptuous
 fare,
 And waiting-maids and grooms to
 share
 Our vicious idleness, and hide
 The dull stupid *ennui* shot with care.

It's all a lie, this life we lead ;
 And breeds in all of us sloth and sin ;
 The coachman wigged and tippeted,
 The maid who cannot sew nor spin,
 The brawny giant that let you in,
 Who should have been a grenadier,
 They're good for nothing before a year,
 Save lazy gossip, tippling gin,
 And keeping a tap-room, and drawing
 beer.

How could I hope to escape the taint ?
 I've not escaped it—I am just
 Like all the rest, on folly bent.
 Like all the rest—devoured with rust
 Of idleness ; a hollow crust
 Of sentiment, and surface wit,
 And scraps of knowledge. I am fit
 For no brave life of love and trust,
 Or a home where the lamp of truth is lit.

You think I draw my portrait ill,
 Beclouded by some fitful mood ;
 And fancy you could raise me still
 Into a nobler world of good.—
 'Tis kindly meant ; but as I brood
 Over the thought, I seem to see
 You failing of your destiny ;
 And for myself I never could
 Live the life you have pictured to me.

I could not bear the poky rooms
 Where Bloomsbury students talk and
 smoke,
 I'd sicken at the steamy fumes,
 The maid-of-all-work would evoke ;
 I'd sooner hear a raven croak
 Than hearken to the flow of wit,
 And watch the gleams of genius flit,
 While shabby artist fellows broke
 The silence with laughter loud and fit.

'Twas nice, of course, to hear from you
 About their wild Bohemian ways ;
 One likes to know how people do
 Who are not in the world. We gaze

Upon their splendid works, and praise
 Their genius, and we long to hear
 About their naughty vices dear,
 So charming in our books and plays,
 Like beings quite in another sphere.

You do not like this tone ? I know
 You hate a false, affected vein ;
 What, then, if we were bound to row,
 Like galley-slaves, together, twain
 Linked each to each by loathsome chain ;
 And by that union sundered more,
 Until the fretting bondage wore
 Your heart, and left an aching pain,
 As the only trace of the love you bore ?

It may not be, it may not be ;
 'Twere grievous sin in me to wed
 A soul to so great misery,
 Binding the living with the dead.
 And now this parting word is said,
 We, being twain, may still love on,
 Who, being one, had turned to stone ;
 We loose our vows, but link, instead,
 Our hearts more surely to love alone.

A sad love ? Yes ! I call to mind,
 That fisher-woman long ago
 Who, in the storm of sleet and wind,
 Lost all her sons at one fell blow—
 Three stalwart men. We saw her go,
 Don't you remember ? with her dead,
 Side by side the corpses laid,
 Three long black coffins in a row,
 On the bench of the boat, head touch-
 ing head.

Never a word came from her lips ;
 She took the helm, and bent the sail,
 And silently slid by the ships,
 Where strong men sob, and women wail ;
 Across the bar she caught the gale,
 And sped on o'er the darkening wave
 Into black night : she never gave
 One sign, but tearless, hard, and pale,
 Sailed with her dead to their father's
 grave.

And now I go like her, with all
 My dead hopes lying cold in me ;
 The great mist cometh, like a wall
 Of darkness, striding o'er the sea ;
 And all my dead are orderly
 Spread out beside me ; and I know
 That they and I together go
 Into the black night, leaving thee,—
 I and my dead hopes all in a row :

Into the moonless, starless gloom,
 Into the grey and trembling cloud,
 Night closing o'er me like a tomb,
 The wet mist clinging as a shroud,
 And the wind wailing dirges loud :—
 Men will call it a wedding gay,
 And maids will flutter, priests will pray,
 And joy-bells gather the village crowd,
 To toast the dead on her bridal day.

Or dead or worse ; they drive me mad ;
 I wot not what the end may be ;
 And there are times I feel so bad,
 And in the shadowy future see,
 In dark revenge of misery,
 A sinful woman scorning shame,
 Spurning a hateful home and name.
 I've known such, yearning to be free
 That they recked not either of guilt
 or blame.

I wot not what it means ; but now
 The stories of your grey North Sea
 Keep running in my head, somehow ;
 And weird and eerie tales they be.
 Was it yourself that told it me ?
 Or some one else ?—I do not know—
 How 'mong the isles the tide-waves
 flow,
 Like maddened steeds that frantically
 Are lashed into fury as on they go ;

And how a fisher-lad was once
 Caught in the race, and swept away ;
 And how his oars, by evil chance,
 Were reft from him ; and how he lay

Helpless among the tossing spray ;
 And how he saw the grim crags loom,
 And heard the big waves crash and
 boom,
 Through mists that darkened on his
 way,
 Darkened and deepened like walls of
 his tomb ;

And how his heart in him grew cold,
 As still the boat went hurrying on,
 Past foaming skerry and headland
 bold,
 Into the darkness all alone ;
 And weird, witch forms, with eyes of
 stone,
 Looked on, and mocked with laughter
 dread,
 As hungry waves, like fierce wolves,
 sped,
 And leaped on him ; and hope was
 gone ;
 And he fain would pray, but cursed
 instead :

And how he lifted up his hand
 To pray or curse, as it might be,
 And in that moment grazed the land,
 When something smote his palm, and he
 Grasped a strong rope unconsciously—
 A fowler's rope that dangled there,
 Down on his darkness and despair,
 Barely dipping the swollen sea—
 And the half-uttered curse gasped into
 a prayer.

Even so am I on fateful tide
 Borne on, and by the surges tossed,
 And helplessly I rock and ride,
 Alone, and in the darkness lost,
 Haunted by many a mocking ghost ;
 No help without, no help within,
 Forsaken in my way of sin,
 Forsaken by myself the most,
 But I reach out in vain through the
 gloom and the din.

I reach out, but I reach in vain ;
No help for me ; I touch the shore ;
They only push me back again ;
The tide sweeps on, the waters roar,
My head is dizzy, my heart is sore ;
I reach out, but no help is near,
A cloud is on my soul, and fear,
And hate and madness evermore
Are hissing their whispers in my ear.

There is no cord of life for me
Amid my darkness and despair ;
Pity me, look not cold on me ;
There's cursing in the heart of
prayer,
And cursing in the very air.
Will you not kiss me once ? and say
You love me still and ever ? Nay ?
So be it. Wherefore should I care
To chafe back the life which were
better away.

O heart, lie dead, and feel no more ;
So best, if I must still live on :
The desert life that lies before
Were best to have a heart of stone.
Now leave me ; I would be alone.
You will be happy yet, and free,
And I accept my destiny.
We had a dream, and it is gone ;
And I wake, but there's no day
breaking for me.

BOOK SIXTH

EDITORIAL

HOME ! in the grey old house beside
the brook ;
Home ! in the dim old room among
his books ;
Home ! with his sister sitting by his
side,
And a fond throng of clinging
memories

Hovering about him, as the swallows
fluttered
Round their old nests, and twittered
in the eaves,
White-throated : there he lay in his
young manhood,
A fever-flush upon his wasted cheek,
And a fire burning in his large grey
eye ;
Waiting, he said, for that uncourtly
valet
Who doth unclothe us of our fleshly
robes,
Preparing us for sleep. I had my
fears ;
Yet life was strong, only it had no
relish,
And hope was broken ; and the
springs of life
Being gone, he only longed to see the
end
Of its hard jolting. Then the Doctors
came,
And tapped, and stethoscoped, and
spoke of râles,
And lesions and adhesions and deaf
parts,
Cells, stitches, mucus, coughs, and
blisterings :
And then, with kindly knowing
helplessness,
They shook their head, and went
upon their way.

But he, in full persuasion that the
end
Had well begun, was tender, cheerful,
kind ;
Not bitter with this world, nor greatly
troubled
About the other : yea, he had great
peace
Thinking of Hester and me, and
laying plans
About our wedding, making settle-
ments

Preposterous, and buying heaven knows what From heaven knows where, but restless till he saw it : Still glad to hear no murmur of the streets, And see no pile of books and sorted task Urging the o'er-wrought brain, and hold no more The sluggish pen in weary, fevered hand. Could he but sleep a little ! Oft he lay, Seeing old faces flit by as in dreams, Hearing old voices talking in the air, All senses strangely keen, and fancy quick, Yet, as it were, a passing instrument Played on by passing sounds and subtle smells And lights and shadows, and all fleeting things. At peace he was with God, at peace with man ; Only he had forgotten how to sleep. I'm not a poet ; I have no romance, But stand by facts, and laws o' the Universe ; Though doubtless rhyme and rhythm and play of fancy Are facts too, and have laws like utter prose. But what I mean is, if a man abuse Stomach and brain, they will revenge themselves For sleepless nights, and hastily-snatched meals, And life at fever-heat. You must not think Of a heart broken, dying in despair Of unrequited love. He loved, and lost That sweetest relish of laborious life Which henceforth was all labour—that was all.	It did not change his spirit, did not fill His mouth with the big words of tragedy, Much pitying himself ; it only set him Doggedly to his task of work, with force Unbroken, undivided, unrelieved ; And therein he had lived, and therein found A joy and fulness of life, till something cracked With the overstrain of so unresting toil. Moreover, he had planned a scheme so vast That only a Goethe-Methuselah, with a power Of vision, and a power of master-work, Prolonged a thousand years, had seen the end on't. But now it is not given to any one To overarch the structure of all knowledge, And crown it with its dome and golden cross ; Nor is it given to any one to work, As God does, leisurely, because He draws Upon the unmeasured ages, wherefore He Alone may say "'Tis finished, and very good." We only do a part, and partly well, And others come and mend it. Thorold tried Too much for our brief life—a cosmic work, And toiled to do it in his week of days That had nor fresh-breathed morn, nor restful eve For him. So he broke down, a wreck, at last, Achieving but a fragment of his thought, A porch, a pillar, and an outline dim.
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Some deemed he was a failure;
 others saw
 The germ of grand discovery in his
 thought,
 And worked it to their profit. Ah!
 well, well:
 There are who give us all they have,
 complete,
 Nothing omitted, nothing lying behind,
 All formulated, tidy, docketed,
 Tied neatly up in ribbons, laid in
 drawers,
 And handy for our use—an entire soul,
 With all its thoughts booked up to
 the last hour
 In double entry: these don't interest
 me;
 I know them, and am done with
 them; they have
 No infinite possibilities, no shadows—
 Of the great God upon them, and
 their light
 Is but a row of foot-lights and
 reflectors
 Shining upon the stage, and on them-
 selves.
 But others, more aspiring than achiev-
 ing,
 Achieve all in suggestion. They lie
 down
 With Nature, as Ruth lay at the feet
 of Boaz,
 Who longed for his upwaking, and
 yet feared
 What the day-break might bring; so
 they with dread
 And yearning wait, till God shall
 speak to them
 The thing they cannot utter, save in
 fragments,
 In broken strains of angel melody,
 Or visions momentary behind the
 veil;
 Yet more suggestive of Divinity,
 More helpful by their infinite reaching
 forth

Than all completed thinking.
 Thorold thus
 Pushed at the gates of God, and
 through the chink
 Caught, wondering, some gleams of
 inmost Light
 Transcendent, and some chords of
 harmony
 Entrancing; unexpected mysteries
 Of unison and beauty, heretofore
 Or jarring, or divided, blended now
 In reconciling vision of higher truth.

LOQUITUR THOROLD

THANKS, Hester dear, this little hand
 Was always gentle; none like thee
 Can smoothe a pillow in all the land,
 Or sweeten the sick-room delicately:
 A tender, loving hand to me—
 Too good, for I was rough and bold;
 Now, let me to the sunshine hold
 The dainty fingers up, and see
 The red light through, as in days of old.
 How sweet the day gleams through
 the faint
 Pink curtains of the dear old room,
 Like heaven-sent visions of a saint
 Tinged with the nature they illumine!
 You've kept all here as fresh as bloom,
 Just as it was long years ago;
 I have not felt blanch linen so
 Lavender-sweet since fateful doom
 Lured me abroad to a world of woe.
 The old flowers through the window
 toss
 Wafts of sweet incense; roses pink
 Knock at the pane, cushioned in moss,
 And yellow buds, too, smile and blink
 Over the sill; and as I drink
 The fragrant breath, an airy jet
 From the sweet-pea and mignonette
 Falls on the sense, and makes me think
 Of the old bright mornings, dewy wet.

Why should, at times, a passing scent,
Just sniffed a moment on the breeze,
Its sensuous power so swiftly spent,
Come laden with more memories
Than the low hum of honey bees,
Or sound of old familiar strains,
Or rustling of the autumn grains,
Or voices from the whispering trees,
Or the running brooks, or the pattering
rains?

The smell of these moss-roses sweet,
More than aught meets the ear or eye,
Speaks of old times, and seems to
greet

Me kindly from the days gone by:—
There by the window you and I
Hearken the kirk-bell in the air,
I see our mother on the stair,
And white-capped matrons leisurely
Trudging along to the house of prayer.

They are all gone, all sainted now,
All clothed in raiment clean and white;
With palm-crown on each grave sad
brow,

They stand before the Fount of light,
And praise His glory day and night;
No wrinkles on their face I see,
No toil-rough hand, nor stiffening knee,
Yet clinging to their glory bright
Is the scent of the sweet thyme and
rosemary.

How the old books look bright in gold!
You must have dusted them all day
To keep them so from moth and
mould.

Those were school prizes near you;
pray

Give me my Homer, that I may
Smell the old Russia smell once more,
And feel the old Greek torrent pour,
Like plashing waves on shingly bay,
As the King mused, wrathful, along
the shore.

Have you forgot your Greek, and all
Our quarrel? How you would have
sent

Fair Helen from the Trojan wall
Back to the King of men, nor spent
One arrow though the bow were bent,
Nor borne a dint on Hector's shield,
Nor planted banner on the field,
Nor shouted from the battlement,
For a woman whose faithless heart
could yield.

You held the men unfit to rule
Who'd launch their galleys on the
deep,

And leave their realms to mickle dule,
And lonely wives to watch and weep,
By sandy shore and rocky steep,
For leman false, and lover faint;
Yea, were she pure as purest saint,
Better have died than so to keep
The kings from their high task of
government.

What scornful beauty you would show
In scorning beauty and its charms!
How eloquent your words would
grow

O'er lordless realms and vague alarms,
And feeble age with rusty arms
Fending the matrons, while the men
Were bleeding on the sand or fen,
Or dreaming of their homes and
farms,

Or fattening the lean wolf in his den.

I think you should have been the boy,
You were so politic and wise,
Impatient of an idle toy,
And piercing with those stedfast
eyes

The heart of all great enterprise.
While I—ah me! my life is sped,
Already numbered with the dead;
And with the vanities and lies
Clasp it up in its coffin lead.

Yes, yes ; I know you'll say me nay ;
 You still believe in me, though I
 Have lost faith in myself, and pray
 For nothing but in peace to die,
 And be forgotten by and by.
 O sister's faith, so fond and true,
 Still hiding failure from our view !
 Close-clinging ivy green and high,
 That covers the ruin with glories new !

Dear, there's a small flower lying in
 My Terence, near the fortieth page :
 'Twas the first honour I did win
 In science, and my youthful gage
 Of earnest battle to assuage
 The thirst for knowledge. Near a stone
 I found it blooming all alone,
 Upon an eager pilgrimage :
 I was first to discover where it had
 grown.

'Tis almost the sole mark to know
 That I have lived ; and I would feel
 What then I felt, when bending low
 I saw its delicate petals steal
 A coy glance, almost where my heel
 Had crushed the treasure ; and I drew
 A long breath, trembling ; and I knew
 The passion of science, and the zeal
 To broaden the realm of the known
 and true.

I found it : but the shepherd lad
 Had found it centuries before,
 And made his rustic maiden glad
 By gilding with its golden store
 Her golden hair—nor cared for more.
 We find we know not what ; we know,
 And idle blossoms, as they blow
 By mountain burn or cottage door,
 Fashion our life into which they grow.

That little flower gave bent to all
 The best years I have lived on earth
 To any purpose. I recall
 Gladly our days of childish mirth,

The blithe home, and the kindly
 hearth ;
 But a rarer light still gilds the hour,
 When happening on this tender flower,
 I found an impulse that gave birth
 From an aimless life to a life of power.

Of power ? Ah no ! This life hath
 been

Feeble and fruitless, like the faint
 And watery glimmer you have seen
 Of broken rainbows, never bent
 In glory athwart the firmament—
 A sickly splendour, would-be light,
 That had not beauty's awful might :
 And now the bootless years are spent,
 And the darkness cometh on me like
 night.

Oh for more time ! a little more !
 I am so young ; and I had planned
 So many years for gathering lore,
 So many for my work in hand—
 My Book which, with a purpose grand,
 Our fragmentary truth should knit
 In cosmic clearness, wholly lit
 And by one sovran doctrine spanned—
 And now, alas ! it will never be writ.

How strangely Destiny is ruled !
 This small pale flower became my lot ;
 And all my wandering fancies
 schooled,
 And gave my life a fixed thought,
 Which to one centre all things
 brought ;
 And henceforth this base earth was all
 Instinct with meaning, prodigal
 Of riches ; yet there cometh not
 One full-ripe fruit to my blossomed
 wall.

So be it ; God hath ordered all
 The way by which my life was led.
 Success it had not, or but small ;
 Nor care I now for laurelled head,

Or sleeping with the glorious dead.
Slight are the trophies I have won,
Meagre is all the work I've done ;
But I have lived, at least, and fed
On that which the noblest live upon.

And now that we are here alone,
Sweet sister, let me tell you all ;
I could not speak to any one
As unto you. Can you recall
A lovely girl, stately and tall,
A maiden with a queenly look,
And how she praised my little book,
And spake of Fame that should
befall
The grey old house by the brattling
brook ?

You did not like her much, I know.
But there was never maiden fair
Seemed worthy, as queen flower, to
grow
Well gardened in my heart with
care,
The chiefest treasure and glory there.
Fond, foolish Hester ! you could see
No Eve my help-meet fit to be
Of all that breathed the common air,
Unless God should fashion her
purposely.

And I deceived you, Hester dear,
And spake of loving none like you,
And talked of seeking a career
Of ardent toil and science true,
When all the while I had in view
Her stately form, her glorious eye,
Her high imperial majesty
Of sovran beauty ; for I knew
She was my Fate, to live or to die.

And so I left the dear old home,
And so I left you, sister dear,
And precious scroll, and cherished
tome,
The gathered wealth of many a year ;

And listed no more to appear
With hammer deftly bringing forth .
The buried records of the earth,
Or to enhance their facts with clear
Thought, which gives to them all
their worth.

And I went forth from thee and
them
To the great world of London, where
Men crowd, they say, to touch the
hem
Of Wisdom's robes, and breathe the
air
Of serene Science ; and the care
Of a wise State has garnered all
Fruits of research, since Adam's fall
By wisdom made our wisdom rare,
And man forgot what we now recall.

Heaven help me ! I used all the slang
Of penny-a-liner big words then ;
I guessed 'twas cant, and yet I rang
The changes on't, like other men ;
Sweet, you may count that nine in
ten
Have nought to say but cant prolific ;
The pious kind is more terrific,
But there's as much in people when
They are literary and scientific.

Abhorred it is of scholar true,
High musing with his books alone ;
Abhorred of accurate science too,
Slow-pondering a leaf or stone ;
But fashion has its torrid zone
Where sages in a week shall grow
Ripe and ready, and seem to know
All that long painful thought hath won
From the heaven above, and the
earth below.

I left you then with little truth
In me—and truth alone is power ;
I left you in your lonely youth
For her ; and found her like a flower

Bee-haunted in the sunny hour,
With a great crown of wits and beaux,
And varied hum of verse and prose
Encircling her, while she would shower
Several influence as she chose.

And they were mainly fools—a set
Of parlour-pedants chattering science,
Their thoughts all tangled in a net
Of hard, dry fact; the pigmy giants
Hurled at the gods their proud defiance,
Tracing fit genealogies
Far back among the cocoa trees,
And fondly hugging brute-alliance
With the monkey tribes and the
chimpanzees.

All heresies of art came there,
All heresies of science too,
All theorists were free to air
All social heresies, and new
Commandments that a man should do,
And women who had wrongs and rights,
And patriots from disastrous fights,
And geniuses came there, who grew
Quicker than mushrooms overnights.

A Babel of confused tongues !
A Limbo of the inchoate !
A gasping of distempered lungs
That blamed the air, and not their state !
All fain to mend the world and fate,
All hating labour, and the slow
Results that from its patience grow ;
And oh, the froth was very great
As they swirled and eddied to and fro.

Yet wherefore should I speak in scorn ?
God made them in their kind, and He
Had use for them, at least had borne
With their most flippant vanity :
As in his Universe we see
A province for all meanest things ;
Even for the earth-worm's twisted rings
A service and a ministry,
To silence our hasty cavillings.

And London is not One. It is
A group of villages, a lot
Of cliques and clubs and coteries ;
Where the fresh fact or novel thought,
Filtered from stage to stage, may not
Long time the simple fact remain,
Or thought as sent from the thinker's
brain ;
Rogues sweat their sovereigns ; fools,
I wot,
Clip smaller the thoughts of their
wisest men.

But she ? Well, she was like a spring
Of purest water, cold and clear,
Where bright birds come to preen
their wing,
And owls and ravens too appear :
She mirrored all as they drew near,
And they all drank, and left no trace ;
But each man deemed he saw his face
Deep in her heart, and had no fear
That the shadow changed when he
changed his place.

Me for a while she honoured with
Selectest intercourse of few,
Rehearsing every night a myth
Of what I was, and how I grew
In a lone country-house, and knew
Science like Pascal, with no aid,
Except the quaintest little maid
Who was a delicate genius too,
And how she had drawn me out of
the shade.

I tired of this ; 'twas weary all,
And all unlike the glorious dream,
Which now with smiles I can recall,
Of a fair woman who did seem
Down on my lower world to gleam,
Like something from the heavens
untainted,
And for whose love my spirit fainted,
And would all lowliest worship deem
Too poor for her I had enshrined and
sainted.

Perhaps I judged her wrong ; her way
Was harder than at first I knew ;
Her young life panted to be gay,
Her young heart panted to be true,
Her home was all divided too,
False science false religion met,
And lavish waste with scrimping debt ;
Poor heart ! the wonder is she grew
Half so noble as she was yet.

You did not know—you could not guess ;
But we had plighted love before ;
We pledged it in a long caress
One evening on the grey sea-shore,
As thought came surging like the hoar,
Wild, bursting waves upon the beach ;
It was a passion beyond speech,
Ne'er quite articulate, and the more
Dumb, that its hope seemed so far
out of reach.

And I do think she loved as well
As she could love ; at any rate
I will not judge her, but will tell
The sorry issue of my fate.
I spake : she said she might not wait
For the slow ripening of my fame,
And the high honours that my name
Would win for some more worthy mate,
But she would cherish it all the same.

Enough ! why dwell on it ? She chose,
After her kind, one of the set ;
A man of blue-books, cold and close,
A scientific baronet,
A creature who would vex and fret
Her soul with circumstantialia,
And pottering among chemicals,
And prosing about funded debt,
And his articles in the serials.

So all was over. I had striven
'Gainst clearest proofs, to prove them
wrong,
Had fought with doubts, as if for Heaven,
To cherish a delusion strong :

And oh the cruel, bitter throng
Of haunting memories that came,
Still summoned by her cherished name,
Sweeping like mocking ghosts along,
As the drear night wind shook the
window-frame !

Seemed now the world a weary waste,
A heartless world, a thing to scorn ;
'Twas only coldness made the chaste,
And Cupid was of Plutus born ;
And evermore my soul was torn
With jealous rage to think of him,
The dainty prig, so spruce and trim,
Whose acres made my heart forlorn,
Whose love was nought but a summer
whim.

Then turned I to my work. Not
mine
I said, to pule for woman's love ;
With searching thoughts will I entwine
Round Nature's porches ; I'm above
Being a slight girl's silken glove
Shaped to her hand, and laid away,
Or taken up, as fancy may :
I have a problem high to prove,
And the facts to gather, and set in
array.

Alone, through many a weary day,
Alone through many a silent night,
I wended on my patient way,
Groping through darkness into light,
Now sore perplexed, now staggered
quite,
Yet slowly working out a thought
That all to clearest order brought :
It held me with a spell of might,
And my days were happy, for I
forgot.

Happy, for I forgot ! Ah me !
I met her one day in the street,
Looking so sorrow-stricken ! he
Was glancing at his dainty feet,

And with his ready smirk would greet
 Me heavy-laden : but I hid
 My sorrow as a thing forbid,
 And while my pained heart madly beat,
 Silently into the throng I slid.

Again I met her in the Park ;
 I was then thin and worn and faint ;
 It was about the gathering dark,
 And scarcely did she know me bent
 With toiling day and night. I went
 Close to her carriage, and she said,
 "Cruel ! I hoped to crown your head
 With laurel ; must my care be spent
 On pallid flowers for a grave,
 instead ?"

A weary look was in her eye,
 A wasting grief on her cheek so pale ;
 And in my heart then muttered I,
 "So, the stony heart has an unheard
 wail

Low moaning on the midnight gale,
 And sighing now for love like mine,
 When love alone is felt divine,
 And life is flat, and riches stale,
 And the soul awakens to long and
 pine."

An evil thought ! God pardon me ;
 The fevered joy of passion fell,
 A lurid light, could only be,
 Glared upward from the depths of
 hell !

Nay, be not wroth : I loved her well,
 Loved her, and love is ne'er in vain,
 Loved her, and found in all its pain
 A dew and blessing, and the swell
 Of a life that joyed like the bounding
 main.

And I had died in early youth
 At any rate. Oh blame her not ;
 She did but make my path more
 smooth,
 And shed some sunlight on my lot.

I had of old this hectic spot—
 Our mother's gift of delicate bloom :
 And it is well she 'scaped the doom
 Of early widowhood. I sought
 To wed her young life to a fated
 tomb.

And as I loved her, you will love,
 And gently scan her, hap what may ;
 Sweet, as we hope to meet above,
 You promise, ere I go away.
 There, kiss me in pledge of it. I lay
 A wager, that's your Hermann strong,
 His deep bass booming a Luther-song
 Out of a heart as big as gay :
 What a great life is that coming
 tramping along !

Would I be like him ? Nay, not
 now ;

Best as it is, dear : all is best.
 I've lived my life ; and gladly bow
 Unto the high, supreme Behest,
 As I draw near the hour of rest,
 Leaving no care behind me here :
 Soon all the mystery shall be clear,
 Or in high fellowship of the Best
 Little we'll heed, with the great God
 near.

My sun sinks without clouds or fears ;
 No spectral shadows gather round
 The gateway of the endless years,
 Where we, long blindfold, are un-
 bound,

And lay our swathings on the ground,
 To face the Eternal. So I rest
 Peacefully on the Strong One's breast,
 Even though the mystery profound
 Ever a mystery be confessed.

My old doubts ?—Well, they no more
 fret,
 Nor chafe and foam o'er sunken rocks.
 I don't know that my Faith is yet
 Quite regular and orthodox ;

I have not keys for all the locks,
And may not pick them. Truth will bear
Neither rude handling, nor unfair
Evasion of its wards, and mocks
Whoever would falsely enter there.

But all through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their
breath :

There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,
And no full vision but by Faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor Justice but by taking blame ;
And that Eternal Passion saith,
"Be emptied of glory and right and
name."

Anselm and Luther, Tauler, Groot,
With reverent search and solemn awe,
Saw each some angle of God's great
thought,

Saw none of them the perfect Law,
And, in defining much, some flaw
Marred all their reasoning ; nor may
I fashion forth the truth which they
Only in broken fragments saw ;
But the way of the just, is to trust and
pray.

I wonder how the twilight shines
On the tinkling brook that cleaves the
hill,

And how it rays with great broad lines
Through rifted clouds that slumber still,
And how the fall that turned our mill
Glistens, and how the shadows fold
Around the dew as night grows cold,
And how the lark with tuneful bill
Sings o'er the meadows we loved of old.

I ever loved our earth, and still
I love its scaurs and brooks and braes,
The long bleak moor, the misty hill,
And all their creatures, and their ways,
And many waters sounding praise ;

It seems as if my lingering feet
Clung to its moss and grasses sweet,
And ferny glades, and golden days
When cowslips and ladybirds made
our hearts beat.

Throw up the window ; let me hear
The mellow ousel once more sing,
The carol of the sky-lark clear,
The hum of insects on the wing,
The lowing of the kine to bring
The milk-maid singing with her pail,
The tricky lapwing's far-off wail,
The woodland cushat's murmuring,
And the *whish* of the pines in the
evening gale.

Fain would I carry with me all
Blithe Nature's blended harmony ;
The half-notes and the tremulous fall
Of her young voices, and the free
Gush of full-throated melody ;
And, like a child, I'm loath to go,
And leave the elders to the flow
Of speech and song and memory,
And take me to sleep in the room below.

But I can yet take up the prayer
Of childhood at the mother's knee,
And breathe it as the natural air
Of truest Faith and Piety,
Its meanings deepening as I see
My deeper needs, His deeper light ;
For wonder grown to wisdom, might
Find there fit utterance, and a key
To the thoughts that reach to the
Infinite.

Our Father, lo ! the end draws near,
And in Thy presence I am dumb ;
Have mercy on my lowly fear,
And Father, let Thy kingdom come :
I thank Thee for my daily crumb,
Forgive me, as I do forgive ;
And in my dying may I live ;
And when the hours of trial come,
Help and deliverance do Thou give.

BORLAND HALL

BOOK FIRST

COLLEGE LIFE

THERE's an old University town
Between the Don and the Dee
Looking over the grey sand dunes,
Looking out on the cold North Sea.
Breezy and blue the waters be,
And rarely there you shall fail to find
The white horse-tails lashing out in
the wind,
Or the mists from the land of ice and
snow
Creeping over them chill and slow.
Sitting o' nights in his silent room,
The student hears the lonesome boom
Of the breaking waves on the long
sand reach,
And the chimring of pebbles along the
beach ;
And gazing out on the level ground,
Or the hush of keen stars wheeling
round,
He *feels* the silence in the sound.

So, hearkening to the City's stir,
Alone in some still house of God
Whose solemn aisles are only trod
By rarely-coming worshipper,
At times, beneath the fret and strife,
The far-off hum, the creaking wain,
The hurrying tread of eager gain,
And all the tide of alien life,
We catch the Eternal Silence best,
And unrest only speaks of rest.

O'er the College Chapel a grey stone
crown
Lightsomely soars above tree and
town,
Lightsomely fronts the Minster towers,
Lightsomely chimes out the passing
hours
To the solemn knell of their deep-
toned bell ;
Kirk and College keeping time,
Faith and Learning, chime for chime.
The Minster stands among the graves,
And its shadow falls on the silent
river ;
The Chapel is girt with young Life's
waves,
And the pulses of hope there are
passioning ever.—
But death is in life, and life is in death ;
Being is more than a gasp of breath :
We come and go, we are seen and lost,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom ;
And oft this body is the tomb,
And the Life is then with the silent host.

In the old University town,
Looking out on the cold North Sea,
'Twixt the Minster towers and the
College crown,
On a winter night as the snow came
down
In broad flakes tremulously,
Falling steady, and falling slow,
Nothing seen but the falling snow,
A youth, with strained and weary looks,
Sat by a table piled with books,

And a shaded lamp that gleamed among
Pages of writing, large and strong.

A glance of sharp impatience flashed
Out of his dark and deep-set eye,
As he lifted his head, and hastily
dashed

The hair from a forehead broad and
high :

For there was a crash and a clamour
and ringing

In the room overhead, and a chorus
singing,

As the bell tolled midnight from near
the graves,

And ere its slow deep note had died,
The chime from the College crown
replied,

And then came the boom of the break-
ing waves.

Some twenty and three years he had
seen,

Or more perchance ; 'tis hard to tell
The age of a face so strong and keen,
The years of a form that was hardened
well

By the winter's cold and the summer's
heat,

And the mountain winds and the rain
and sleet.

Big-boned, with the look of unformed
power ;

In body and brain and passion strong :
Over his square brow fell a shower
Of black hair, waving and thick and
long.

It was a great brown hand that gripp'd
The pliant quill o'er the blotted
sheet,—

No soft and clerkly finger slipt
Over the pages, glib and fleet ;
More like that of a man with sword
equipt,

Grasping the hilt his foe to meet.
An eager, strenuous spirit, meaning
To do with might what he had to do,

And rarely trusting, never leaning,
But self-reliant and bold and true ;
A nature rugged and hard and strong ;
Yet, as among the rocks and fells,
Where most the storms rage loud and
long,

The deepest silence also dwells,
And there are brightest mossy wells
Among the nodding heather bells :
So in his stormy spirit dwelt
The hush of that religious sense,
The silence of that great reverence
Which the strong and brave have
always felt ;

Nor less the tender beauty wrought
By fresh well-springs of feeling deep
And Love, that whether we wake or
sleep,

Brightens and sweetens every lot.

In the room overhead a clamour rang,
But hushed for a moment, as some one
sang

Cheery and clearly, each note like a
bell

Floating the words off, round and well.

PARTY OF STUDENTS IN THE UPPER ROOM

First Student.—Look, how Darrel
is moping ; ask him to sing ;
They are dull fellows poets, unless they
can get

All the say to themselves : there he
stands in a pet,

Like a hen on one leg with her head
'neath her wing.

Second Student. Nay, let him alone ;
Cupid hit him last night ;
I heard the sharp twang of his bow,
and it broke his

Poor Muse's wing, who came down,
in sad plight,

With a flutter of anapæsts, dactyls,
and trochees.

Third Student.—Ralph, come, pluck
up heart, man, and give us a stave :
Love is life to the poet, like wind to
a ship,
It will give you a song, though she
give you the slip,
Which you'll sing at her wedding, or
else o'er her grave ;
For the song is as much as the Love
to the poet ;—
'Tis the fruit, and the passion was but
soil to grow it.

Song—SHE IS A WOMAN

She is a woman to love, to love,
As flowers love light,
And all that is best in you is at its best,
When she enters your heart as a
welcome guest,
Making it bright.

She is a woman to love, to love
With a love sincere,
For all that is bad in you hides away,
Like the bats and the owls from the
glory of day,
When she is near.

She is a woman to love, to love
As maid or wife,
And all of her that is sweet and true—
Which is all of her—she will give to
you,
To perfect life.

You cannot help but love, but love,
Nobody can,
She carries a charm with her every-
where
In her gait, in her glance, in her voice,
in her hair,
Bewitching man.

What is it in her you love, you love ?
Is it her face,

Beaming with beauty along the way ?
Is it her wit so nimble and gay ?
Is it her grace ?

None of them truly, but one and all,
And the something unseen
Which should lie behind beauty and
wit and art—
The noble nature, the soul, the heart,
With its joy serene.

Hear her laugh, as the children play,
See her bring
Light to the eyes of the old and weak ;
And oh how wisely her lips can speak
As well as sing !

That is a woman to love, to love,
And to wonder at,
For whether she talks, or walks, or rides,
'Tis as if she had never done aught
besides
But perfect that.

First Student.—A fig for your love-
ditties ! Cupid's an ass,
And the wise man will drown the
small elf in his glass.

Second Student.—Ha, ha ! lads, I
told you our Ralph had been hit :
Now, guess the rare mixture of beauty
and wit.

Third Student.—Nay, we name not
the name of a damsel of honour ;
Enough that such verses come shower-
ing upon her.
Now for something more stirring. I
sing like a horse ;
But here's for the old land of heather
and gorse.

Sings—UP IN THE NORTH

Up in the North, up in the North,
There lies the true home of valour
and worth ;

Wild the wind sweeps over moorland
and glen,
But truth is trusty, and men are men,
And hearts grow warmer the farther
you go,
Up to the North with its hills and snow.
Ho for the North, yo ho !

Out of the North, out of the North,
All the free men of the nations came
forth ;
Kings of the sea, they rode, like its
waves,
Crash on the old Roman empire of
slaves,
And the poor cowed serfs and their
Cæsars saw
Rise from its ruins, our Freedom and
Law.

Ho for the North, yo ho !

Up in the North, up in the North,
O but our maids are the fairest on earth,
Simple and pure as the white briar-rose,
And their thoughts like the dew which
it clasps as it blows ;
There are no homes but where they be,
Woman made home in the north
countrie.

Ho for the North, yo ho !

O for the North, O for the North !
O to be there when the stars come
forth !
The less that the myrtle or rose is given,
The more do we see there the glory
of heaven ;
And care and burden I leave behind
When I turn my face to the old
North wind.

Ho for the North, yo ho !

First Student.—Pshaw ! your patriot-
song now is only sonorous ;
And, besides, people laugh at us talk-
ing so grand,

And praising ourselves, and our
crusty old land.

Come, set us a catch with a rattling
good chorus.

Third Student.—Nay, none of your
catches. Ralph, let's have a
stave

With a touch of the pathos, like that
which you gave

At the Doctor's last evening : I
noted his eye :

How he sipped his glass daintily
while it was dry !

How he gulped it in tumblers a frigate
might float,

With the tear in his eye, and the
lump in his throat !

You may roar out a chorus, lads :
but to my thinking,

There is nothing like pathos, for good
steady drinking.

All.—Ay, ay, Ralph, touch up the
feelings a bit ;

And let each prime his glass : weep-
ing's drier than wit.

Darrell.—But nothing will please
you. Well, never mind ;

The birds sing their songs to the
trees and the wind.

Song—MYSIE GORDON

Now where is Mysie Gordon gone ?

What should take her up the glen,
Turning, dowie and alone,

From smithy lads and farming
men ?—

Never seen where lasses, daffing
At the well, are blithely laughing,
Dinging a' the chields at chaffing :

Bonnie Mysie Gordon.

Mysie lo'ed a student gay,

And he vowed he lo'ed her well :

She gave all her heart away,

He lo'ed naething but himsel' :

Then he went to woo his fortune,
Fleechin', preachin', and exhortin',
Got a Kirk, and now is courtin'—
But no his Mysie Gordon.

Every night across the moor,
Where the whaup and pewit cry,
Mysie seeks his mither's door
Wi' the saut tear in her eye.
Little wots his boastfu' Minnie,
Proud to tell about her Johnnie,
Every word's a stab to bonnie
Love-sick Mysie Gordon.

A' his letters she maun read,
A' about the lady braw ;
Though the lassie's heart may bleed,
Though it even break in twa ;
Wae her life may be and weary,
Mirk the nicht may be and eerie,
Yet she'll gang, and fain luik cheerie,
Bonnie Mysie Gordon.

Whiles she thinks it maun be richt ;
She is but a landward girl ;
He a scholar, and a licht
Mickle thocht o' by the Earl.
Whiles she daurna think about it,
Thole her love, nor live without it,
Sair alike to trust, or doubt it,
Waesome Mysie Gordon.

Mysie doesna curse the cuif,
Doesna hate the lady braw,
Doesna even haud aloof;
Nor wish them ony ill ava :
Nor she leaves his proudfu' mither,
Dragging through the dowie
heather
Weary feet by ane anither ;
Bonnie Mysie Gordon.

First Student.—A sell ! a sell ! why,
I've emptied my glass :
And it's only a fellow that jilted his
lass.

Second Student.—I wonder now
Ralph, you can look in my face !
We asked you for pathos, and lo !
commonplace.

Third Student.—Silence there !
Ralph, you must try it again.
Hark ! how the sea moans : give us
a strain
Caught from the wail of the lonesome
main.

Song—THE FALSE SEA

I

Singing to you,
And moaning to me ;
Nothing is true
In the false, cruel sea.
Where its lip kisses
The sands, they are bare,
Where its foam hisses,
Nothing lives there ;
When it is smiling,
Hushed as in sleep,
It is beguiling
Some one to weep.

II

They went seafaring,
With light hearts and free,
And full of the daring
That's bred of the sea :
It crept up the inlet,
And bore them away
Where it laughed in the sunlight,
And dimpled the bay,
Singing to them,
But moaning to me,
Tripping it came,
The cold, cruel sea.

III

I heard the oars dipping,
I heard her bows part
The waves with a rippling
That went through my heart.

And I saw women weeping
And wringing their hands
For the dead that were sleeping
That night on the sands :
For nothing is true
In the false cruel sea
Which is singing to you,
And moaning to me.

Long and loud the clamour rose,
Bells were ringing, doors were banging,
Feet were tramping, glasses clanging ;
Seemed the racket ne'er would close :
And listening to the uproar loud
Thus his thoughts upon him crowd.

AUSTEN LYELL

COLLEGE-MUSING

CRASH ! crash ! there they go, Ralph,
Darrel and Hugh,
And little Tom Guild, and that jovial
crew.
First, cups in the tavern, and brawls in
the street,
A springing of rattles, and scuffling
of feet,
A laughter and screaming of girls, and
a thud
As of some one that falls in the slush
and the mud ;
Then a rush up the stairs, and tramp,
tramp overhead,
With a Babel of speech that might
waken the dead,
A clinking of glasses, and ringing
of bells,
And song after song till the daylight
draws near—
Ralph sings like a bird, how his voice
trills and swells !
And the rogues make a chorus that
catches the ear :
Love song and drinking song, madrigal,
glee,

Breaking in on the long-rolling boom
of the sea.

What to do with their tramping and
chorusing so
Through the still hours of thought,
with the lamp burning low ?
Let me read as I will, I read nothing
but words ;
And somehow they run into quavers
and chords—
Metaphysics in music, crabbed Latin
in tunes,
With no more clear meaning than so
many Runes :
At the trick of the singer they trip in
light measure,
But shake from their folds the fine
thought which they treasure.
What to do ?—Why not join in their
jolly carouse ?
Ralph's a splendid young scamp, and
has plenty of *nous*,
Ay, and more Greek and Latin than
half of the fellows
Who are cramming for honours, dull,
bilious, and jealous.
Now, were Socrates here, and saw
how they mope,
And travail in pain with a theme, or a
trope,
And drag out a thought as with pulleys
and cranks,
How his jests would go crack like a
whip on their flanks !
But for Ralph—there the Greek eye
would brighten to witness
His beauty and vigour, his swiftness
and fitness
For wisdom or valour, for pleasure or
power,
For speech to the Demos, or maid in
her bower,
For bridling the wild horse, or quaffing
the bowl,

Or holding discourse of the gods and
the soul :

For dear to the sage was a beautiful
youth,

And the wholeness of manhood was
precious as truth.

And I too am young ; and my blood
too is hot

With the lust of all broad roads where
pleasure is got.

They think me a bookworm, a winner
of prizes,

Full of priggish decorums, and learned
surmises ;

Precise as a Puritan ; feeding on Scholia,
And Elzevir classics, and black

Melancholia :

Yet the craving of passion is gnawing
within,

And the strong human hanker to dally
with sin.

Ho ! a flask of old wine, grey with
cobwebs, whose scent

Made the grim spiders jolly in bloated
content.

Rare toppers ! no fly buzzed their
darkness, or brought

The grossness of appetite into their
thought ;

Nor bubble nor bead marred the
rapture divine,

But they netted aroma, and breathed
the bright wine,

And folding the cork in their mouse-
coloured wraps,

They boozed on, and dreamt not of
time and its lapse.

And oh for my Horace's Daphne or
Phyllis,

Low-browed, and breathing of
wreathed amaryllis ;

How her eyes beam, and her golden
curls break,

Like tangled laburnum drops, round
her white neck !—

Shell-tipped her fingers are, taper and
long,

Tripping she comes to me, lissom
and strong,

Yet coy too, and hard to be caught,
till I kiss

The blushes and dimples, and revel in
bliss.

Why not ? Why should phantoms of
beauty and grace,

Pink and gold with the sunniest hues
of delight,

Hang like clouds in their glory before
the warm face

Of our youth, as it comes, in its morn-
ing and might,

Shining and singing and fresh with the
dew ;

Yet all be but shadows, and nothing
be true ?—

All but vanity, dream and inanity,
Nothing to shower down a blessing on
you !

How was it that Goethe in full
measure tasted

All that Life had to give him, nor
missed aught, nor wasted !

Sat Shakespeare alone thus, and heard
the dogs bark,

Like an owl in a barn staring into the
dark,

And warming its five wits to find out
the mystery

Of this wonderful world, and its
wonderful history !

Did they shrink from love-tryste,
song, or bright-beaded wine,

As if only the dulness of life were
divine ?

Nay, their nets swept the stream of
our full-flowing gladness,

Its still pools of thought, and side-
eddies of sadness ;

Where life was the deepest, and passion was strong, They fished in its waters, and lingered there long, And so they were rich in the glorious sense Of a wealth of world-wide experience. And what is it all for—this heaping of ashes On the hot fire of youth till you smother its flashes?— This stating again of our hopeless imbroglios, And dulling the brain with the dust of old folios? There's my old school-companion, Dick Gow of the Glen, With the brains of a half man, and labours of ten; How he toils on, and mopes over volumes patristic, And dogmas forensic, and rites eucharistic, And fictions of law, that he calls gospel verity, And tries to believe he believes in sincerity. Meanwhile in the glen where his childhood had been Stands the lowly turf hut, where the house-leek is green; Near by it, the burn rushes hurrying down Through the rocky gorge headlong, and turbid, and brown, Or glistens o'er slippery shelves, green with long moss, Where the maiden-hair tresses stretch half-way across, Or sleeps in the pools where the speckled trout play, And leap to the fly when the evening is grey, Or sings through the woodland its few plaintive bars	To the slender oak-fern, and the pale sorrel-stars. There, cramped with rheumatics, and bending with age, His grave father sweats at the ditch and the hedge, And sisters and brothers are patiently drudging From day-break till dark, unrepining, ungrudging; And all, as they stint food and raiment and fire, Have but one hope that cheers them— to see the Kirk spire In the glory long prayed for, when crossing the hill. Lo! the folk are fast gathering from farmstead and mill, From the shepherd's lone hut in the deep mountain shade, And the wood-ranger's hid in the dim forest glade, All to hear their boy preach the great Gospel, and sever Himself from the old home and old life for ever.— That's the end of his struggle, when Priesthood has riven The fondest of earth's ties, that bind us to heaven; Has sundered those hearts that were loving and true, And linked him now fast to the Laird, and the few Respectable folk who have nothing to do! Or there is young Barbour; his factor- ing father Heeds of nothing but charters, and wadsets, and leases, Rotations of cropping, and how he shall gather Biggest rents for my Lord whose waste daily increases.
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But his boy, he must ponder high questions of Law, And store up old precedent, rubric, and saw, Load his memory daily with cases in point, Learn the sharp fence of Logic to pierce through a joint In his learned friend's argument, parry his hits, Or to pester a witness half out of his wits. Great the thoughts of his youth, to determine all right By the law which the landlords have voted is light, For ever immutable, sacred, divine, To the serf of the glebe, and the thrall of the mine. So his days and his nights shall be spent, and his youth Dried up into parchment, amassing the truth Which entails the broad acres of meadow and corn, And the heath-purpled hills where the wild deer are born, And the fish of the river, and bird of the air To the high chosen people for whom the gods care— Whose the anointing is, whose is the money, And whose is the land, with its milk and honey, So he squanders bright youth with its wonder and awe For a wig and a gown, and this vision of Law!	Or meet for a high life of courage and duty; Only that which will pay: for our culture is meant Not to make noble men, but a hand- some per cent. We touch on all topics, but nothing we know; We open all questions, and still leave them so; Never look to the end of them, dare not abide By the issues we raise, but glance ever aside; For there is not a lie, spite of God's high decree, But has made its nest sure, on some branch of our tree, And has some vested right to exist in the land, And some who will have it the tree could not stand If the sticks, straws, and feathers, that sheltered the wrong, Were swept from the boughs they have cumbered so long.
Oh, but Culture? and what all the culture we get? Old furniture crammed into "Lodg- ings to let,"— Nothing blending in harmony, graceful in beauty,	Let me toss to the wind every dream; let me know All that Nature full-blooded, full- handed, can show; Let me touch at all points the whole life that man lives, And taste with a relish all pleasure it gives, Link the sweet notes of music with sweet words of song, Wreathe the arms in the dance, and go tripping along, Kiss the peach-blossom cheek, rich with life's glowing dyes, And know the wild rapture of love- gleaming eyes, Crown the cup with its flowers, purple lip with old wine,

And let young vigour rage—in its
passion divine.

Ah! we grow hydrocephalous, swell-
ing the brain

At the cost of our manhood, till think-
ing is pain,

And the surfeited mind labours wearily
through

A task which the healthful Greek
lightly would do—

Lightly and laughing, for subtle and
strong,

He lived at full pitch, and his life was
a song.

Why, what demon is this, with the
logic of Hell,

That pleads for the wild Beast within
me so well—

The Beast that was doomed to a Cross
by the Three

Awful names, that are named in the
great Mystery?

Down, down, thou foul fiend! Hence
to leprous romance

Of the *demi-monde* poisonous mush-
rooms of France.

Better sin like a man, doing after his
kind,

Than sit here cold-blooded, debauch-
ing the mind.—

Hark! Ralph sings again, but he
sings all alone,

And he wails now, poor fellow, the
days that are gone.

Song—THE HOURS

Brown, gipsy hours, with white teeth
laughing gay,

Came trooping by me, when a child
at play,

And with their coaxing stole my life
away

Where bird in bush was idling all the
day.

Soft, roguish hours, that in the gloam-
ing peep

At woodland nooks a dewy tryste to
keep,

Stole my young life away, and in a
heap

Of rose leaves, sweetly smelling, hid
it deep.

Dark, robber hours, like burglars in
the night,

They broke into my house, by cunning
sleight,

And bound me fast, as with a spell of
might,

And reft my life away ere morning
light.

The idle bird is silent on the tree,
The rose leaves withered now and
scentless be,

The spell is broken; lo! mine eyes
can see—

O thievish hours that stole my life
from me!

Lost, lost! and now the mists, low
trailing, screen

The visioned glories that I once have
seen,

And all the hours are grey and cold
and mean—

Lost, lost my life—and oh, the might
have been!

So the young soul to darkness is
hopelessly wending—

And this is the dream that I dreamt,
and its ending!

But why was it ever dreamt? How
could I spirt

The froth of that dead sea, or stir up
its dirt?

Ah! we strike a few chords ere the
music we play,

Preluding the strain, as if light fingers
stray

Dreamily over the keys, till they find
 The melody shape itself clear in the
 mind ;
 So we dream, and from dreaming we
 glide into act,
 And our life is the dream in a rhythm
 of hard fact.
 And can this be the prelude to mine,
 like the moan
 Of the sea as it laps the curved sand
 or the stone
 In the moon-glimmered bay, while its
 far depths are stirred
 By the throes of the storm that is
 coming? I've heard
 That the knight, ere he buckled gilt-
 spur to his heel,
 Or belted his thigh with the good
 sword of steel,
 Laid his arms on the altar, helmet
 and shield,
 Breastplate and banner, and watched
 there, and kneeled
 All the long night on the pavement of
 stone,
 All the long night in the darkness alone,
 All the long night, while fiends in the
 air
 Plied him with terrors, or strove to
 ensnare ;
 But I, what a watch have I kept !

Here suddenly he rose, and stood
 Close by the window in dreamy mood.
 The snow had ceased to fall, and lay
 White o'er all the level reach,
 White to the sand-dunes and the beach
 Where the tumbling breakers fell,
 And what was snow, and what was
 spray,
 It was hard for the eye to tell.
 The broad white moon was hurrying
 swift,
 Trailing her pale skirts over the drift
 Of the flying clouds ; and through a
 rift,

Here and there, in the distance far,
 He caught the gleam of a throbbing
 star ;
 And away to the north was a band of
 light,
 That wavered like the sheen of spears
 Swaying about in some ghostly fight—
 For all was ghostly in that wan night,
 And the shadows passed like fears—
 Wan the moon looked, and wan the
 cloud,
 And wan the earth in its snowy shroud.
 So, as he gazed, his eyes grew dim,
 And moon and stars were hid from him
 By some strange mist, and then the mist
 Shaped itself into forms, I wist :
 And he saw his old home, 'neath the
 wooded hill,
 Between the bridge and the red-roofed
 mill,
 And the village near it, sleepy and still.
 O'er the high pine-tops the clouds
 were creeping,
 And all the heavens were grey and
 cold ;
 And he was aware that Death was
 there,
 For amid the hush was a sound of
 weeping,
 And as it were muffled, the kirk bell
 tolled.
 Was it the bell?—or only the boom
 Of the waves that mixed with his
 dreamy thought?
 Whose face was that in the darkened
 room?
 The features changed in the shadowy
 gloom,
 But the passionless calm, it changèd not.
 Sometimes, he thought it was his own ;
 Sometimes, it had his mother's look ;
 And his quivering lip gave a low,
 faint moan
 At the pathos of its still rebuke.—
 Had he broken her heart by the way
 he took ?

Then Austen ; Can this be a dream I
 am dreaming ;
 Yet I see the clouds drifting o'erhead,
 the moon gleaming
 On the cold hard blue of the sea, and
 the stars—
 Lo ! yonder the Pleiades, yonder red
 Mars ;
 But they seem to shine in through an
 oak-panelled ceiling
 Which is solid and real, with a weird,
 alien feeling,
 As if they were the shadows, and it
 alone true.
 Or was it the shadow of Fate that
 I saw
 On my old mother's home, with a
 chill sense of awe ?
 She is not what she was, and her
 letters have strange
 Longings of late in them, hinting of
 change.
 She used to be hard, though as true as
 the steel,
 And is not one to utter the half she
 may feel ;
 Now she'd fain have me with her, is
 weary alone
 In the wild winter evenings ; and ere
 she is gone
 There is so much to say ; yet I must
 not let that,
 Or the thought of her, hinder the
 work I am at.
 That's not like her, somehow ; its
 mild, mellow light
 Is soft as the gloaming that fades into
 night ;
 Yet here have I been adding shadows
 of sin
 To the shadow of death she is walk-
 ing in ;
 Help me, O God, that my life may
 yet prove
 True to Thy thought, and the hope of
 her love.

From the old University town
 Looking out on the cold north sea
 He carried high honours down
 To his home in the hill country :
 And proud was the mother that bore
 him then,
 Though little she said, for that was
 her way ;
 But all the village, and all the glen,
 When they saw her, dressed in her
 goodliest grey,
 Walk to the kirk on Sunday, knew
 That whether the sermon was old or
 new,
 Whether the prayers were brief or long,
 Or the psalms were all sung out of tune,
 Or the doctrine all unsound and wrong,
 Or the service stayed till afternoon,
 This once at least, she would not hear
 For the voices of triumph that filled
 her ear :
 And bonnets, too, might be gay and
 bright,
 And ribbons flash in the gleams of light,
 And eyes might turn from the pulpit,
 too,
 To gaze at the young laird's stately pew ;
 For once the sin would be forgot
 Of garment gay and wandering thought ;
 And sooth to say, they blamed her not.
 They liked the youth ; and learning
 still
 Is more esteemed among the folk
 Who till the glebe, or watch the flock,
 In lonely glen, or silent hill,
 Than wealth of gold ; and also he
 Was wont to mix with them pleasantly :
 And it was as if honour had come on
 them all
 When he stood up among them grave
 and tall,
 At the smithy door, or the bowling
 green,
 Hurling the quoit, or rolling the ball,
 Foremost scholar the year had seen.

BOOK SECOND

BORLAND GLEN

As you come over the hill, a little way
 down, the road
 Suddenly sweeps to the right, and lo !
 a green valley and broad ;
 Through it a river runs swift, its water
 broken by rocks
 And boulders, cleaving its way as by
 rapidest bounds and shocks ;
 Now with a clear rush on, and now
 recoiling again,
 To wheel round the barrier huge, it
 has hammered for ages in vain,
 Only dinting deep holes in its ribs, and
 chafing itself into foam,
 Then swirling away to the bank to
 bite at the softer loam.
 Yonder an old peel tower, hid in
 clumps of the ivy green,
 Perched on its crag like an eyrie, and
 there the whole valley is seen ;
 Not an approach South or North,
 East or West, but the watchman's
 eye
 Would catch the sheen of the spears,
 and the banners would well descry,
 And sound the alarm in time for
 hoisting the drawbridge high.
 Away to the right on its lawn, close-
 shaven by mowing machines,
 Stands the house which the great
 cotton-lord built out of his bobbins
 and skeins :
 Brand-new, all gables and turrets and
 chimneys, stack upon stack,
 Something top-heavy it looks, and
 bare too and cold, but the lack
 Of trees is made up, by acres of glass
 for magnificent vineries,
 Palm-houses, ferneries, cucumber beds,
 and great melon-frames and the
 pineries.

Far at the end of the valley, open three
 narrow glens,
 Each with its own marked features,
 charactered clear as men's ;
 Each with its own fair water finding
 its fitting way,
 Rough o'er the rocky channel, or still
 by the broomy brae.
 That to the left is rugged ; one side,
 a bare bleak hill
 With a cataract, rugged, of stones
 down-rushing as if they would fill
 The glen with grey desolation ; and
 half-way down a thorn
 Seems as it stayed the torrent, and was
 bent with the weight and worn.
 Only that thorn on the hillside grapples
 the stones with its root,
 Only some scraggy hazel bushes
 straggle about its foot,
 Only the curlew wails there, and the
 grouse-cock crows at morn :
 Only the goat and the coney poise on
 those stony heaps,
 Only the parsley fern along their barren
 spaces creeps.
 And far below in the hollow the
 stream goes plunging on
 From the rocky steep to the rocky
 pool, and the rumbling boulder stone.
 The middle glen is wooded ; there the
 ancient lords of the land,
 Leaving their high-pitched eyrie, built
 a stately house and grand
 Right under the Murrough-crag, pine-
 clad up to the top,
 And they belted the woods all round
 them, and bade the highways stop,
 And they made them a goodly forest,
 stocked with the wild red deer,
 And they drew the stream into fishponds,
 and swept with their nets the mere.
 The wild deer bound in the woodlands
 now, but there is none to care,
 And the trout are fat in the fishponds,
 and the water-lily is fair,

Stately and grand the house is still,
 and the terraced gardens fine,
 But the young lord comes not ever—
 he is drinking the beaded wine,
 Or pigeon-shooting by Thames, or
 marking the red by the Rhine.
 Fair is the glen to the right, in its
 pastoral beauty still,
 Green in its holms and hollows, green
 to the top of each hill ;
 A line of alder and drooping birch
 marks where its river flows,
 But in its bare upper reaches only the
 juniper grows :
 The stream comes out of a tarn on the
 hill, whose oozy edge
 Is fringed with a ring of lilies and an
 outer ring of sedge ;
 And there is no road beyond that, only
 a mountain high,
 And a cairn of stones where the
 withered bones of Three brave
 Martys lie.

Now, at the mouth of that green glen,
 hid in a bosk of trees,
 The oak and the beech and the chest-
 nut, and lime, honeyed haunt of the
 bees,
 And the yew and the ash, and many a
 shrub, blossomy, fragrant, green,
 Nestled a quaint old mansion ; bit by
 bit, it had been
 Built now and then, as they could, yet
 it rambled somehow into shape,
 Picturesque, here a low gable rising
 step upon step,
 There a long corridor broken with
 quaint dormer windows, and then
 An old square tower of rough rubble,
 built for the rough fighting men ;
 But the front is all draped now with
 creepers, with scarlet and golden
 flower,
 Till it looks in its summer beauty like
 some fairy-haunted bower,

Hid in its bosk of trees, under the
 shade of the hill
 Where the river sweeps clear from the
 bridge down to the red-roofed mill.
 Austen sat there with his mother, alone
 at the close of day,
 Sat with a visage perplexed, while she
 looked hard and gray,
 With furrows drawn deep on her fore-
 head, and temples fallen away
 Into blue-veined pits, and you plainly
 saw the shadow of death on her face ;
 But she sat erect in her high-backed
 chair, and sternly held her place,
 As if she would say, While there's
 breath in me, lo ! in weakness I will
 show
 Weakness to no one, but keep at arm's
 length the terrible foe.
 So, with a Bible before her, and a
 spinning-wheel at her side,
 Hardly and sharply she spoke, and he,
 with bated breath, replied.

BORLAND'S WIDOW

I AM your mother, and Scripture saith
 Thou shalt honour me until death ;
 Yea, not even death shall set you free
 From the honour and duty owing to me ;
 For what I have willed, and signed,
 and sealed,
 Ere I go to the other world, worse or
 better,
 Though it wound with a wound that
 shall never be healed,
 Thou shalt carry it out to the utter-
 most letter.
 Now, wilt thou promise me this, or no ;
 And get my blessing before I go ?
 Yes, there is something upon my mind,
 Ill to keep there, and worse to tell ;
 Yet it's borne upon me that I must find
 A way to utter it, ill or well,

To you of all men, and only you.
 Sooner than speak I could die the
 death,
 But death will not come to me till I do ;
 And oh I am weary of life and breath.
 Yet my lips shall be sealed, as death
 can seal them,
 And the devil may shuffle the cards,
 and deal them
 To all of you, as he did to me,
 If you will not swear to me faithfully,
 Over the Book here, to do my will,
 Whether you reckon it good or ill.

Oh ! you will do all that a son may do,
 In honour and right, for his mother's
 name !
 Fine words ! But "honour and right"
 from you
 As if your old mother would set you to
 Work of dishonour and deed of
 shame !—
 But perhaps you have reason—who
 can say ?
 Maybe I taught you to lie and cheat,
 And drink and steal, as well as pray :
 A rogue is but half a rogue, incomplete
 Till he burst out a full-blossomed
 hypocrite ;
 So I brought you up in the good old
 way,
 To fit you the better for deeds of
 dishonour
 Your wicked old mother had taken
 upon her !—
 Nay, none of your fondling and kiss-
 ing and weeping ;
 That's not in my way ; I'd as lief you
 were heaping
 Your fine-scholar words into fine
 tricks of speech—
 Though they bite in the quick, and
 stick fast as a leech.
 I am your mother, and loved you well,
 But I never could babble and prattle,
 or jingle

Small rhymes like a fool with a cap
 and bell,
 Or an idiot bird in the dewy dingle
 Squirming away to the gaping forms
 That care for nothing but slugs and
 worms.
 Baby or boy, it was not from me
 That you learned to be mawkish and
 womanly.

Cautious and scrupulous !—You have
 no doubt
 You can do what I wish, but you just
 wish to know it !—
 Go, leave me alone ; I can die here
 without
 A love that has nothing but fine words
 to show it.
 Ay, ay ; you'll do well for yourself in
 the end,
 Ne'er to sign a blank cheque for lover
 or friend,
 Treat the dearest on earth as a possible
 rogue,
 Trust none but yourself—it's the
 wisdom in vogue,
 The counting-house wisdom, proper
 for those
 Of the clerk and the shopkeeper kind,
 I suppose.
 And yet I've heard say, by wise men
 in my day,
 That none are outwitted so easy as
 they
 Who reckon with all men as if they
 suspect them,
 And traffic in caution, and watch to
 detect them.
 But no doubt, you're wise ; far wiser
 than I ;
 Go your way, then, and leave your
 old mother to lie
 In the death-grips of nature, and
 wrestle it out,
 With a weight on her heart and a fire
 in her brain,

In death as in life, alone with her pain,
Alone with the devils within and
without.

A minister! Tush, they are feckless
gear—

All of the kind now I see or hear.

I have been kirk-going all my life,

As maiden and mother, as widow and
wife:

It was the thing that we had to do,

Ever as Sabbath or Fast came due,

Girl and boy, young man and maiden,

Burning with passion, or sorrow-laden;

Though why we did it I never knew,

Only that others did it too.

For the Parsons are dumb dogs, turn-
ing round,

And scratching their hole in the
warmest ground,

And laying them down in the sun to
wink,

Drowsing, and dreaming, and thinking
they think,

As they mumble the marrowless bones
of morals,

Like toothless children gnawing their
corals,

Gnawing their corals to soothe their
gums

With the kind of watery thought that
comes.—

Bonnie-like guides with their *whilly-
wha*,

All about loving, and nothing of law;

All about Gospel, and nothing of hell,

All tinkle-tinkling like a bell,

And telling you ever that all is well.

I heard their sough; but all the time

I would con the words of the Hebrew
prophet,

That crashed on the soul with an awful
chime,

Like charges of guilt and sin and crime,

And burnt them in with the fires of
Tophet.

Ah! these were men: but your
minister,

Nowadays, is a weak kind of milliner:
Shaven and smooth, the creature
stands

With soft white hands, and long lawn
bands,

His weak chest panting a plaintive
whine,

As he turns into water the sacred wine

Given by the prophets strong and
divine.

That's the one miracle he can do,

Turning the wine into water true.

Leave the minister, then, to his
Sunday's sermon:

We have matters of earnest to
determine.

So you promise me now to do my
will,

Whether you reckon it good or ill.

There, let me see how best to begin

The old, old story of trial and sin.

Look from the window, boy, and see

The bonnie green braes of Borland
Glen;

Cornland and woodland and lily-white
lea,

Up to the skyline, hill and tree,

All will be yours to the waterhead

Where it flows from the bosom of big
Knockbain,

And the Kelpie's pool lies dark and
dead

Under the great rocks, towering red,

And only the ripple of water-hen

Stirs its surface, now and then,

As she oars her way from the outer
edge

Through the bending ring of spotted
sedge,

And the ring of water-lilies, within,

That fringes with beauty the dark pool
of sin.

O but Borland Glen is dear to me ;
 It cost me dear ; but it is not that :
 Nor yet for its wealth do I love to see
 Its soft round hills, or its meadows flat ;
 But summer and winter I've been there,
 Till it filled my heart, and unaware
 Its beauty stole away my care.
 There are green oak woods on Briery-
 brae,
 And sleek are the kine on Fernielea,
 Blithe are the holms of Avongray,
 And the sheep-walks good on Ar-
 na-shee,
 And wild thyme blooms, and pansies
 grow
 On many a knoll where harebells blow ;
 And I sat, and dreamed there long ago.
 Yet somehow this day I cannot see
 Green oak-scrub, or milk-white lea,
 Or the drooping birch, or the red pine-
 tree,
 Cows knee-deep in the aftermath,
 Or lines of sheep on the mountain path,
 Nothing of all I cared for then—
 Nought save the frightened water-hen
 Rippling the pool beyond the edge
 Of water-lily and spotted sedge.
 But all the long, green glen is mine,
 And I'll pay the price that it may be
 thine :

I counted the cost when I had it to do,
 And I will not shrink when the bill is
 due.

You were a baby when I came here,
 And I was a widow of half a year,
 Poorly left when your father died :
 But I was not one to sit down and
 pine,
 And wring my useless hands and whine,
 While work might be done, and the
 world was wide.
 So I came to keep house for the Laird,
 for all
 Was going to wreck here in Borland
 Hall ;

And he was a far-off cousin ; I trow
 He counted kin with my mother
 somehow.

He was a widower, and he had
 Only a girl to heir the land ;
 Never before had they failed of a lad
 To follow his father, good or bad,
 And take the reins from his failing
 hand.

And it irked the Laird, though he
 loved her dearly—

As well he might, his bonnie May,
 For meet her late, or meet her early,
 Ever she met you blithe and gay ;
 Ever so dainty, white and saintly,
 Scented ever with perfume faintly,
 Flitting like butterfly over the green
 In clouds of muslin soft and clean,
 With a flower in her hair, and a song
 on her lips,

Thrilling with joy to her finger-tips.
 Yet fondly as he loved the maiden
 Tripping about in the garden trim,
 Like a gleam of light, with her figure
 slim,

Now and then he was heavy laden
 That Borlands of Borland should end
 with him.

I liked her not from the first, for she
 Came ever between me and a thought
 Growing up in my heart, and warm-
 ing me

With a hope that gladdened my
 widowed lot :

But soft and silly, she knew it not,
 And vowed she should be broken-
 hearted,

To be like me from my baby parted.
 I liked her not, but I will not lie,
 It was partly because she was better
 than I,

For I was not good, and I did not try.
 There are people whose blood is honey
 and milk,

And people whose veins are filled with
gall;

As some are born to the gold and silk,
And some must be beggars, and go to
the wall;

There's a higher than we that orders
all.

She was gentle and good, and I was
not;

But I had the wit and the keener
thought.

So all the while I hated her :

She stood between me and the thought

That silently in my bosom wrought,

Like the leaven that makes so little
stir,

Yet changes every grain of the meal ;

I knew it was there, but did not dare

To bring it forth to the open air,

And face the thought which I liked
to feel :

Till one day—I can ne'er forget—

She bent across the Kelpie's pool,

To seize a water-lily wet,

That shewed its egg-cup, yellow and
full,

Just outside the fringe of sedge,

As the water-hen oared from the
muddy edge ;

When plunge into the loch she fell,

And I felt my heart leap with the
hope of Hell.

At first, she laughed, then screamed,
I ween,

As deep she sank in the muddy slush ;

A little more, and there had been

But a bubble of air, and an awful hush,

And the whish of the sedges in the
wind,

And the laughter that rippled my heart
and mind.—

Nay, stare not so with horror ; I

Wished it, but did not let her die ;

I was not wicked enough for that,

Though I felt my heart go pit-a-pat,

And it was not with sorrow or fear or
pain ;

But I knew the thing that was in me
then.

It was not of myself I thought,

It was not for myself I wrought,

It was not hate that prompted me,

It was the love I bore to thee :

I only sinned, if sin was done,

For the love I bore to my only son.

And yet you look on your mother's
face

With a horror-stricken and ghastly
stare !

I tell you I was not near the place

When her stifled scream rose in the air :

But I ran, and drew the silly fool,

Draggled and dazed, from the Kelpie's
pool.

That night he vowed that he would
make

A home for you in Borland Hall,

And love you for your mother's sake,

Only next to her who was heir of all ;

And what less could they do or say

To her who had saved the bonnie
May ?

Thus it was that you came here,

And then my way of life was clear.

I saw you playing among the flowers,

I heard your laugh in the ringing woods,

O'er the tiny nests, and their tiny
broods,

And I sware that the land should all
be ours.

You were but a child, not two years
old,

But your looks were sunny, your ways
were bold,

And the Laird was fond of you. Had
she been

A baby like you !—for a moment I
thought of it,

Till I plainly saw that I could make
nothing of it—

You might have married the pretty
 May-queen ;
 But she made a doll of you, petted and
 kissed you,
 Told you stories, and *deared* you, and
 dressed you,
 Called you her wee pet darling, and won
 Your love so, she turned my heart into
 stone ;
 For I—I was selling my soul for you ;
 And there was she, coming between
 us two.
 I was not a young mother, and had
 but you,
 And she, with the wealth of her youth,
 would steal
 The only joy that my heart could feel !

Coming about the house just then
 Was one of your fine-feathered, gay
 young men,
 Curled and scented, ringed and gloved,
 Selfish and useless, and feeble of will,
 With nothing to do but his time to kill,
 Take care of himself, and be tenderly
 loved,
 Quote the old Poets, and sing the new
 songs,
 And talk about younger sons and their
 wrongs
 In the evil days he had fallen upon,
 When they had to compete with the
 grocer's son—
 One of the sort that fathers hate,
 But girls will fancy to be their Fate.
 Idly he loitered shooting and fishing,
 And mending the world in the even-
 ing with wishing ;
 Idle and listless. What could I do ?
 Was it my affair how he came and
 went ?
 I could not be keeping her always in
 view ;
 And I did tell the Laird, and I
 warned her too,
 But she only looked injured innocent.

So he came and went, though her
 father forbade,
 And I saw her sicken of love to the
 lad,
 Sicken of love, and saunter away
 Through the woodland paths in the
 evening grey,
 Looking so listless till the hour,
 Looking so fevered when it came ;
 And I just stood by my drooping
 flower
 Quietly seeing her play my game ;
 And who shall say that I was to
 blame ?
 The Laird did not blame me, with
 all his wrath,—
 And terrible was the storm which
 broke
 That morning when the household
 woke,
 And the little bird was not found in
 her nest,
 Nor flitting about the garden path,
 Nor came evermore to be caressed,
 Or to fasten the dewy flower in his
 breast.
 And he never looked on his bonnie
 May
 After she wedded her popinjay.

 The Laird was a fool—He was sharp
 with his wit,
 Critical, clever, but still a fool.
 With scheme after scheme he was
 fever-smit,
 And somebody always made him a
 tool ;
 But when he was most in his logic-fit,
 Then most of all would he play the
 fool.
 Now, he would lay you out plans
 sagacious,
 Of planting, draining, and strange
 manures ;
 Brimful now of reforms audacious,
 Oh but he had new-fangled cures,

Would have poisoned the sweet-
 breathed cows in the byre,
 Only we flung the rank trash in the
 fire—
 Every one knew the Laird and his
 way,
 And quietly heard what he had to say,
 But none for a moment thought to
 obey.
 He was never so happy as when he
 had
 Poets and painters, good or bad,
 Actors and fiddlers and editor folk,
 Fishing the water from bank and rock,
 And gathered at evening round his
 table,
 Jestng and drinking, as each was able,
 And story-telling with laughter long,
 Till the early cock from the roost
 would crow,
 And the laverock lilted his morning
 song,
 And it was time for the maids to go
 Away to the kine on the meadows low.
 Oh but there was no care or thrift,
 Only how to spend, and how to shift,
 How to borrow, and how to lend ;
 And nobody looked to the bitter end.

There would be botanists now to dine,
 Dry as their withered leaves and
 flowers !

We did not stint their meat and wine,
 We did not grudge the weary hours,
 Pottering along the glens and brooks
 With microscopes, or fishing-hooks ;
 But when they spoke of shrubs and trees
 In other lands beyond the seas,
 Nothing would do but the Laird
 must send,
 And bring them here from the far
 world's end,
 Though where to plant them nobody
 knew,
 And they rotted away in the sun and
 dew.

And prints and pictures must be
 bought,
 Wherever the money was to be got,
 When he had artist visitors,
 Though they covered the walls, and
 stood on the floors,
 And crowded out in the corridors—
 Dusty rubbish that cost a ransom.
 And our rhymers and fiddlers and
 actors gay
 Were always borrowing something
 handsome,
 And always forgetting the time to pay.
 But the Laird must be patron of all
 the arts
 When he should have been seeing to
 ploughs and carts ;
 And food and drink were never
 spared :
 The factor's books were never squared ;
 And groom in the stable, woodland
 ranger,
 Scullion wench, and lass in the byre,
 All were living at hack and manger,
 With hardly a peat for the parlour
 fire :
 And had I not taken his gear in hand,
 The Laird would have lost every acre
 of land.

So I looked into this, and saw to that,
 And had my eye upon everything :
 There was not a tinker, or beggar's
 brat
 Got handful of meal from the kitchen
 bing,
 Nor a toothless tyke, or a useless cat
 Was left to lie on a rug or mat,
 Doing nought for its meat and drink,
 But only to lie in the sun and wink.
 I taught the household, man and maid,
 To waste not a crumb of their master's
 bread,
 To waste not an hour of their master's
 day,
 Gadding about as it was their way ;

But to rise with the sun the whole
year round,
And to work with the sun in house
or ground:—

God was working and so must we,
They could rest on the Sabbath as
well as He :

They must do their duty to man and
beast,

Ere they get food or wage off me ;
And I would not see their master
fleeced,

And brought by their waste to
poverty.—

We had many sharp words ; but sharper
still

The ways that I took to have my will.

He was angry, of course, when they
complained:—

I counted on that—he was grieved
and pained ;

For Borland Hall had always been
Noted well for its kindly ways

To beast and body, and all who had seen,
Feckless creatures ! the best of their
days ;

And from mother to daughter, as
each had grown,

Service there had been handed down.

I only said, “ We must begin

To save the money we cannot win :

And all had been waste, and spend-
thrift all,

In stable and bothie, in byre and hall ;

But service should be service true,

If I had anything there to do.

Fitter it were his father's son

Should clip and pare at the other end

Where the waste was most, and the
ruin done ;

But they were neither kith nor friend,

That saw, and did nothing to make
or mend.

Was there not a bond on Brierybrae ?

And a wadset heavy on Fernielea ?

And what would he do when his hairs
were grey,
And the fiddlers had fiddled his land
away ?

And it was breaking my heart to see
The wanton waste upon every hand
That was robbing him both of house
and land.”

Thus it was that, day by day,
And bit by bit, I got my way.

I scraped and pinched, but I saw to it
That the Laird was served with all
things fit,

All in their season, good and plenty :—
He was just the man to be nice and
dainty.

And I gathered moneys, here and
there,

To meet his bills when they came due :

He had careless grown from very care ;

To be able to pay was something new,

And resting on me, scarce aware,

He had more of ease than he ever
knew.

That made him think ; so he brought
to me

Papers to find what his debts might be ;

He had tried to make out, but he tried
in vain ;

They bothered his head till it ached
with pain.

That was just what I wished ; so I
summed up his debts,

And sorted his papers, bills and bets ;

And I made him give heed to the
plans I laid—

At least he agreed to all I said,

And learnt to lean on me, and leant.

We thinned the woods, and raised the
rent—

The land was good, and underlet—

And the running bills, with their
heavy per cent.,

And all the careless rust of debt.

We began, at once, to be clearing off,
 Learning never to mind the scoff
 Of fools that trust in a chance to-morrow,
 Learning the worth of honest thrift,
 And the shabbiness of the debtor's shift.
 So happily now the days went by :
 Our geniuses were not so many,
 But happier we for the want of any :—
 Always hungry and always dry,
 Always hankering for the penny,
 Always forgetting the time to pay ;
 I found the means to keep them away.
 We were not patrons now of art,
 We heard not many sayings smart :
 We got not dedications fine,
 Nor long accounts for costly wine :
 We were not the great man we had been ;
 We saw not the grand days we had seen ;
 But plack and penny we paid our way,
 And were not afraid of the reckoning day.

He leant on me, and took to you ;
 But he came in the end to stint and pare,
 Now that he had not a child to heir
 The hoarded wealth, as it daily grew ;
 And I think I scorned him for his greed
 Even more than for his wastefulness :
 It was myself that had sown the seed,
 And yet I scorned him none the less ;
 He was less of the gallant gentleman,
 Since all his thoughts upon money ran.
 He grudged my wage, he grudged to you
 The schooling meet and the clothing due,
 And I think it was only in hope to save,
 And keep together his goods and gear,
 That he wedded me, when he saw his grave
 And the end of all things drawing near.

But wedded we were, and then he sent,
 And signed and sealed with the Notary,
 And over all the land he went—
 The land he had orderly willed to me,
 To hold and keep, sell or dispoise,
 Ploughland and pasture, hill and wood,
 Fishing and messuage, every rood,
 All the rights that had been his own,
 And his fathers before him, ages gone,
 From the big Nine-stanes to the Kelpie's pool,
 And along the hills to the skyline clear,
 The good corn lands by the kirk and school,
 And the sunny haughs for kine and steer,
 The bonnie green woods of Brierybrae,
 And the long sheep-walks, and the peat moss blaes.
 It is all set down in a clerkly hand,
 And he writ me heir of all the land ;
 He was sane in mind and body as you,
 And he went to kirk and market too.
 Boy, look not on me so glum and cold :
 I did nothing was wrong ; or if I did
 It was all for you, that you might hold
 Your own with the bravest, and none forbid.
 And so you shall too, whatever they say
 Of me,—it's little I care for them ;
 For if I have sinned, I am ready to pay
 The stake that I lost when I played my game.
 But I did nothing wrong, I did my duty ;
 And the girl was vain in her wilful beauty ;
 And he would never have named me heir,
 If the thing that I did had not been fair.
 And your right, at least, has never a flaw ;
 It is sound in morals, and clear in law :

My soul may suffer — that's my concern ;
 It can hardly be worse than it has been of late,
 It can hardly be worse though it frizzle and burn
 In the quenchless fires of the sinner's fate.
 But with me and my guilt, you have nothing to do ;
 And you've pledged me your word, if they plea it with you—
 She and her popinjay husband are dead,
 But there were children, people said,
 And it's not to be doubted they'll try the law,
 And search the will for a loop or flaw—
 But you'll grip to the land, and be laird of all
 The bonnie green glen, and Borland Hall.

What say you? what?—You cannot do it!
 You take back your word that you gave ere you knew it!
 You palter with faith, and play with an oath,
 Hard on your mother, and false to your troth!
 You have scruples, forsooth, to do my will,
 But never a scruple to break your word,
 Never a scruple, although you kill
 The mother that bore you, and loved you still
 Better, woe's me! than she loved her Lord!
 Can it be I have sold my soul for nought,
 Counting the cost, and ready to pay?
 Shall I fail in the thing so dearly bought?
 And you—will you be the one to say,
 "She gambled away her soul for me ;

And only the devil shall profit by it?"

Hark! how the wind is howling! see
 The sun is out in its maddest riot;
 How the great trees moan and creak,
 and toss
 Their big arms, hairy and rough with moss,
 And shake to their roots with the sudden shocks!
 Terrible to the cowering flocks.
 I knew *they* would come, and let them come:
 I never had faith in the dainty hum
 Of new-fangled doctrine buzzed about,
 As if hell and the devil were all a doubt.
 But let them come; I am well content
 Eternal justice should be done,
 And the guilty reap their punishment,
 And the Lord be true, and He alone.
 But I have your oath, and I hold you to it,
 And earth or heaven may not undo it,
 Your oath on the book, and you'll keep it truly,
 And grip to the land I have willed you duly.
 If her bairns are poor, there is money in hand,
 Quite as much as the worth of the land
 When I took the charge of it;—give them that;
 I have not squandered goods or gear,
 Nor wasted any gift I gat
 On belly or back, this many a year;
 But seeing the break-neck laird of Rhynns
 Racing as fast as horse and bet
 Could run him into the black Gazette,
 I thought we might add his scrubs and whins,
 Some day yet, to our bonnie glen—
 They're better sport for gentlemen.—
 But give them the gold, if they make a rout;

Maybe it were a good turn to me,
 If you helped them a bit in their
 poverty,—
 But that's little better than papistry.—
 Only grip to the land, and plea it
 out ;
 It is yours by right, there is never a
 doubt.

Scarce were the words from her
 mouth, when, lo ! the hand with its
 puckered skin
 Powerless fell at her side, her side
 that was all drawn in
 By a sudden stroke, and her eyes were
 hard and set, and she tried
 Vainly to say something more.
 Wildly he pled with her, cried
 For pity to the great Heavens, but
 she nor they replied ;
 And so it went on through the night,
 until at cock-crowing she died.

BOOK THIRD

THE FUNERAL

ALL the day long, and the next night
 he sat,
 With the dread Presence, in that
 chamber dim,
 And neither stirred nor uttered any
 word,
 Nor ate nor drank ; and much they
 grieved thereat ;
 And greatly wondered, greatly pitying
 him :

Nor spake, nor stirred, nor gave one
 sign of life,
 Or knowledge of the life that still
 went on,
 Like one a-dream, or like a frozen
 stream

With the ice-grip upon its fret and
 strife,
 So fixed was he, and changed as into
 stone.

Stony his face, his feelings stony too,
 Stony and icy was the hard, set eye,
 And stony felt the heart that would
 not melt,
 And all his weary world a desert
 grew,
 A wilderness of stones, where dead
 hopes lie.

Hushed were the household, as they
 came and went
 A-tiptoe through dim lobby, and
 dusky room,
 And whispered low of that heart-
 breaking woe
 Which lined the young face as it
 sternly leant
 On the clenched hand, and never
 changed its gloom.

They brought him dainties which he
 never saw,
 The choicest of the vintage, old and
 rare ;
 They culled fresh flowers he loved in
 happier hours,
 And laid them near him with a silent
 awe,
 But they all knew he knew not they
 were there.

Two days he sat with that awed
 Silence dread,
 Death's silence, deeper than to be
 alone,
 And you could hear hearts beat for
 very fear,
 Noting the corded hand, and fixed
 head
 Which stared at that white Form with
 eyes of stone.

For as they went in pairs, and passed
his door,
The charm of terror made them pause
and look,
And by the sight rouse to more utter
fright
Their beating hearts that trembled so,
before,
And no control of reasoned thought
would brook.

Eerie and lone, the east wind moaning
low
Billowed the carpets high on lobby
and stair,
The timid mouse went pattering
through the house,
And from the roof a spider dropped
below,
Knitting its thread to his unmoving hair.

The dog howled from his kennel, and
his chain
Harsh grated, as the owl screeched
from the barn,
A phantom fear seemed ever creeping
near,
And in the wood the wild cat yelled
amain,
And boomed the bittern from the
lonely tarn.

He heeded not, for nought outside
he knew,
Swept by the rush and whirl of
maddening thought,
And deaf and blind, with agony of
mind,
At that dark tale which ever darker
grew,
And all his soul to desolation brought.

For she had been his bulwark 'gainst
the sea
Of doubts that lashed, and vexed his
unquiet spirit;

His forest-land that stayed the desert-
band
And drifting sand - storms from the
fields which he
Cultured and kept that God might
them inherit.

Him she had straitly trained in ways
of truth
And righteousness and piety and awe,
Nor spared the rod to drive him unto
God,
But with a ruthless method taught him
ruth,
And schooled him in the Gospel by
stern law.

Yet for that all she taught was surely
good,
And for that she exalted God
supreme
In all she did, and all that she forbid,
And for that love wrought in her
hardest mood,
To him she had been type of worth
extreme.

Now, Heaven and all the gods rushed
madly down,
Like Dagon's house when its main
pillar fell:
And truth and right, and all things
clean and white,
Angel and saint, and the Eternal
crown,
All, all seemed lost in thickest smoke
of Hell.

Gone the fond vision of his trustful youth,
Gone all the awe of natural reverence,
Gone the pure love that seemed of
heaven above,
Gone all the certainty of worth and
truth—
The fell-mist clouded every higher
sense.

Could that be true which she, in falsehood, taught? Could that be good, which, being ill, she praised? And oh the pain, the ache of heart and brain! To think that mother could be base and naught, On whom as God's stern witness he had gazed. For still our common Heaven is seldom reared On solid arch of reason, firmly built, But the high Faith that has to vanquish death Rests on the lap where first we prayed, and feared, And wondered in the dawn of thought and guilt. Still lies its weight on mother-love and truth; And oh the sorrow if her truth should fail! Still its strong bands are her so just commands; And oh the weakness when they break! and youth Finds its Heaven dark, and hears the night-winds wail! On the third day, he went out on the hill, And wandered restless, yet un- wearying; Then sat him down, and with a rigid frown Gazed steadfast on the yellow tormentil, And little milk-wort peeping through the ling. Long there he sat, as one by some fell blow Stunned, which had loosened every joint and band,	And cast into amazement strange and new All ordered thought, so that he did not know The marks and bearings now of sea or land. But coming from the breezy mountain top, All saw a change, and yet with pain they saw: For lightsome now, the cloud swept from his brow, Words fierce and bitter from his lips would drop, And laughter too that made them creep with awe. Far stranger than the silence and the gloom Seemed now the order sharp, and words precise, And the hard reason that sounded out of season, And satire grim that mocked the very tomb, And clear, cool sense, prompt with its fit advice. Seemed never madness like that perfect sense, Seemed never raving like that reason clear, So out of place, so without touch of grace; Even dull, dim souls that were of judgment dense Drew off, estranged, and shivering, and with fear; Which made him harder than he was before, And tipped his mocking speech with sharper scorn, Till they were all met for the funeral, When the mad impulse taunted them, and tore Away the mask from every face forlorn.
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This was his thought, These neighbours all have known The shameful fact, and yet have silence kept; They made no din, for wealth can gild a sin; They never told me, that I might atone, But fawned like beaten hounds, and round her crept. Hollow and false our life, and this they knew; Hollow and false, although I knew it not; And she is gone, and I am left alone, To right the cruel wrong I did not do;— So bitterly he spake from bitter thought.	Friends, I am young; I wot not how the chief Mourner should act on such occasions solemn,— Whether to bury my face in handkerchief, Or stand up silent as a marble column. I ne'er was at a funeral before, I never saw such faces as I see, I never heard such creaking of a door, And no one swearing at it furiously; Perhaps I should be silent, or should groan— All of you did it when our Pastor here Spake of the crown which had become her own The moment that she left our lower sphere; Forgive me, friends; I am not used to these Appropriate moans, appointed agonies, Which sigh the weary to their place of rest, And groan the saints to mansions of the blest.
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THE WILL

KINSMEN and friends and neighbours, all of you Giving me the sad honour of your presence, I thank you, as I surely ought to do, For judged by looks, you are not here for pleasure: I see each face shaded by doleful gloom, I hear but dismal whispers round the room; And therefore the good custom of our land Offers you wine and cake and potent spirit, Which the sad heart, by scriptural command, Should take upon occasion fit to cheer it: Drink, then, and stint not whisky good or wine, Your souls are heavy, and the cost is mine.	The Pastor spoke good words and excellent— I hope his name is mentioned in the Will; It will be hard to have canonised a saint, Yet find no church or cleric codicil For all the charity that did by her Handsomely, as became her minister— Yet everybody groaned, and looked as sad As if the glorious crown were something bad. Now, for myself, when once the wick is crushed, I ask not where the light is, which is not, Nor where the music, when the harp is hushed, Nor where the memory which is soon forgot.
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Death comes to all; that's certain;
 heaven and hell
 Are just as you believe, or don't
 believe:
 But Faith is hard, and therefore we
 will leave
 That matter, if you please, for time
 to tell:
 But come or life or death, we all
 must dine,
 And come or joy or sorrow, wine is
 good;
 And be her gathered savings yours
 or mine,
 The Will must needs be read and
 understood;
 And therefore when we've laid her in
 the ground,
 And smoothed the turf upon the lowly
 mound,
 We'll dine here, if you please, and
 read the Will—
 And by my Faith it will be rare
 to see
 How sinks the glass of most sweet
 charity
 At this bequest and that odd codicil.
 Pray come; I've killed my beeves
 and broached my wine,
 The living die, but living, they must
 dine;
 The dead depart, but then their goods
 remain,
 To soothe our sorrow, and relieve
 our pain.
 Some murmured "Shameful!"
 "Shocking!" "Bad, too bad!"
 "His mother's funeral too!" and
 "Drink, I fear!"
 "Enough to call down judgments on
 us all";
 And others hinted that he must be
 mad;
 Yet all came back to feast, who bore
 the bier.

And seated at the head of that full
 board,
 Outstretching his great limbs, his eye
 on fire,
 Young Austen quaffed the brimming
 ale, and laughed
 A scornful laugh, and bade his guests
 accord
 Good heed to duty ere they fed desire.
 We'll take the Will first, as a tooth-
 some whet;
 It's hanging o'er us like a pending
 debt,
 Spoiling all appetite, forbidding rest
 With hopes uncertain of a rich bequest:
 Lo! here are cousins thrice-removed,
 but blood,
 Thicker than water, sticks to one
 like mud.
 When poor, they wounded not my
 mother's soul
 With humbling gifts of money or of
 dress;
 But if they shrank with sorrow to
 condole,
 They failed not to congratulate
 success,
 But when she needed nothing, nought
 they spared
 In costly tokens of their fond regard.
 The Will, the Will, then! she was
 good and wise;
 Their blushing virtues, no doubt, they
 forgot,
 And did all this as though they did
 it not;
 And so the Will will be a glad surprise.
 And you, her Pastor, faithful to your
 charge,
 You scrupled not to tell her, round
 and large,
 How hard the rich do find the way
 to heaven,
 As camels through a needle's eye
 are driven.

She liked not sermons much, I must confess, Even slighted them as marrowless dry-bones, And wanting bread, she said they gave her stones, But she could not forget your faith- fulness. Nor yours, good doctor, ever at her call, But never called, because she physic hated, Moreover she was never sick at all ; But still the yearly fee was ne'er abated, Though powder, pill, or potion, great or small, Blister or clyster, never knew in her What healing virtues they might minister. But where is she to whom the place belongs, The bonnie May, so dear to all the glen, Prankt with her flowers, and tripping to her songs In those white robes that witched the hearts of men ? Old neighbours, ye whose lives are memories Of better days, when all was sunny and blithe, And in the wet grass ye would stay the scythe To catch her greeting smile at sweet sunrise ; She came and went 'mong you a gleam of light, That warmed the heart, and made the old Hall bright ; There was no mate seemed good enough for her, Nor any fate but that she would confer Honour upon it, as religion brings Glory and beauty to the highest things. Of course, you're here to see how wrong is righted, And justice to the orphan is requited.	The Will, the Will, then ; let us have the Will ;— For all our hopes it surely must fulfil. They understood him not, but felt the tone Of irony that hardened all his speech, And mocking laughter that, coming quickly after, Crept fast, and tingled keen through flesh and bone. With shock of shame as deep as words might reach. But when the Will was read which all bequeathed, Monies and lands, unto her only son, Nor other name named, but with mark of shame Or bitter taunt, a biting scorn that breathed— A scorn she never hid, and spared to none ; Straightway they rose in wrath, and left untasted The ample viands, scowling as they went ; And silent long, remembered now the wrong Done to the heir, nor heeded, as they hasted, His urgent pleas that they were weak and faint. Surely they needed food, and must not go Till they had tried his beeves, and drunk his wine ; Would not the priest say grace for them at least ? And might not some strong waters break the blow ? But only the cool lawyer stayed to dine.
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He stayed to dine, and yet he did
not dine;
For lo! the heir must have the
village poor
To eat the feast, unblessed by Christian
priest;
And he too high and dainty was,
and fine,
And flouncing forth, indignant, banged
the door.

So, with the lame and halt and maimed
and blind,
And all the pauper world for miles about,
The feast was high, and noisy revelry,
And with their songs they startled
the night wind,
And shook their tattered duds with
drunken shout.

For he, with strange, wild recklessness
would stir
All weird and eerie thoughts to feed
his mood,
And nought too grim or *gruesome*
seemed for him;
Maddened, that night, by memory
of her,
He shrank from all pure springs of
bright or good.

So it went on until the morning broke;
And when the morning broke he was
alone,
The household all had vanished from
the Hall
At the strange coming of the beggar folk,
And now again he felt his heart like stone.

One only word he spake: "O misery!
Never to see her, hear her nevermore,
No hope of change—oh pitiful and
strange!
And she went drifting on that sunless sea,
And she lies wrecked upon that silent
shore!

"Dead! and this wrong unrighted,
unrepented!
Dead! and to me this horrible
bequest!
Dead! and my faith, too, dying in
her death!
Mother, O mother!—if you had
relented!
But now there is no joy for me or
rest!"

And at the morning's dawn he rose
and went
All through the house, and every
window barred,
And every door he locked on every floor,
And with the keys his weary way he
bent
Along the mountain pathway, rough
and hard.

Faintly the sunshine tipped the clouds
with red,
Faintly the spring-birds fluttered into
song,
The mountain stream rippled as in a
dream,
And dream-like in the mist the sleek
kine fed
On the low meadows, moving slow
along.

And slow and weary up the glen he
passed,
Weary and slow amid the dim, slant
light,
Until he stood beside the old pine-wood
Above the red crag which its shadow
cast
O'er the dark pool, and water-lilies
white.

All round the rim still rustled the tall
sedge,
Broad leaves of lily paved the pool
within,

The water-hen, unconscious now of
men,
Oared herself, rippling outward from
the edge.
And with her young brood paddled
out and in.

And standing in the pine-wood's
darkling shade,
He hurled the keys down, with a
mighty curse
Upon his lips! his soul in dark eclipse,
And with the keys, the Will that she
had made,
And strode in gloom across the moor
and furze.

But as he sped along that trackless way,
Stumbling o'er snake-like roots that
twisted white
On the black peat, and caught his
hurrying feet,
The strong-knit moral fibre claimed
its sway,
And kindlier feelings brought a sweeter
light:—

A sweeter light that humbled him,
and shed
Upon his jagged nature calm rebuke,
And made him hate his anger passionate;
And by and by he lifted up his head,
Knitting his forehead with a resolute
look.

Lord God, to whom the hidden things
belong,
Pardon my burdened, darkened spirit,
long
Prying at every crevice of this wrong.

Burdened and darkened, mad to find
some light,
And in my madness making deeper
night;
Calm Thou my heart, and help me to
do right.

I do remember her, the gentle May,
Like a soft morning star whose melting
ray
Hung, lingering, dewy o'er mine early
day;

Faint as a dream of something white
and pure,
A shapeless form that search would
not endure,
Which ever changing, ever seemed
unsure;

Yet ever in its wavering loveliness,
It brought to me a sense of tender bliss,
Like lips that from the past clung with
a kiss—

A downy cheek that warmly lay on
mine,
And eyes that shined on me a light
divine;—
A shadow, and its voice an echo fine!

One task remains to me; let me but find
The secret of those children left
behind;
No oath that binds to wrong can ever
bind.

Or if it do, better the curse I bore
Than bind upon a mother evermore
This bitter wrong, and bolt her prison
door.

Too late? I know not, for He
changeth not;
Too late? Our hearts change, and
they change our lot;
Who ever changed, and yet no mercy
got?

But be it fruitful of a curse on me;
And be it fruitless, mother, now to
thee;
It is the right, and that is all we see.

BOOK FOURTH

THE HOWFF

A LITTLE cottage, trim and neat,
 The simple home of simple folk,
 Stood by itself, well off the street,
 Not far from where the two roads meet
 Beneath the dingy Town-house clock :
 The Howff, or haunt of favoured
 youth,
 The envy of the lads who yet
 Had to make good their love of truth,
 Whether the way were rough or smooth,
 By fearless thought or searching wit.
 It was an University
 For all the spirits bright and free.

Weekly they met, and held discourse
 Of science, and its march sublime,
 And what is Matter, what is Force,
 And what Creation, and the course
 Of its development in time ;
 Nor was the policy forgot
 Of nations, though the man was more,
 The nation less than in the thought
 Of many, and they counted not
 To remedy the ills he bore,
 And fill his cup unto the brim,
 Yet have no remedy for him.

And still their converse verged on
 things,
 More sacred, where the reason passed
 From common earth, and needed wings
 To soar up to those higher springs
 That lie amid the shadows vast
 Where God dwells, making darkness
 light

Unto the faith that can attain :
 And some of them beheld the light,
 And some were in a chill dark night,
 And some were hesitating, fain
 To give old words a novel sense ;
 But all were full of reverence.

A sister and a brother there
 Kept house together, rich in love,
 And in the thoughts that filled the air,
 And sympathies that everywhere,
 Around, beneath them, and above
 Found kindred souls and faithful
 friends,

For that they had the master-key—
 The love that all things comprehends,
 And opens every heart, and bends
 All to its clear simplicity :
 Artless and gentle, wise, and true,
 All wise and gentle souls they drew.

Yet he was but an artizan,
 And hardly twenty years had seen ;
 A humble, absent, dreamy man,
 Whose mind on mathematics ran,
 Or planned some new machine ;
 And guileless as a child was he,
 Yet daring as a man who walks,
 In his most meek simplicity,
 In a far world of theory,
 And with the hard world seldom talks,
 Or tests his visionary thought
 By the experience it has bought.

An artizan, but artist too,
 Inventive ; none like him could make
 The optic glass, and shape it true,
 And polish it for perfect view
 Of far-off hidden stars that break
 The blank black spaces in the sky.
 And he, by mathematic fit,
 Knew when to turn the searching eye
 Upon the field where it must lie,
 And seek till he discovered it ;
 And therefore science crowned his
 name
 With its award of early fame.

And he was greatly loved, but still
 More loving, and by all esteemed
 For upright walk, and curious skill,
 Inventive thought, and steadfast will,
 Yea, even for the dreams he dreamed ;

So true he was, and seeking truth,
 So rich in multifarious lore,
 So patient with impetuous youth,
 So helpful oft their path to smooth
 By drawing from his varied store ;
 So humbly reverent of the wise,
 It humbled them to watch his eyes.

But she, his sister, fond and brave,
 And jealous of his due respect,
 Who rose up like a threatening wave,
 And proudly curled her lip, and gave
 Such glance of scorn, with head erect,
 When some one risked a thoughtless jest
 At his abstract and dreamy mood—
 She held him wisest, truest, best ;
 And in protecting, but expressed
 Her reverence for a soul that stood
 Above the common world as far
 As some serene and distant star.

A glorious girl, high-thoughted, bright
 And beautiful, with woman's sense,
 And woman's tact, and keen insight,
 A loving heart, and gay and light
 In her assured innocence ;
 A scholar eager still to learn,
 A teacher careful to instruct,
 She toiled her daily bread to earn,
 She toiled high wisdom to discern,
 And in the pleasant evenings pluckt
 The fruit that was her young life's dream,
 To see him held in such esteem.

Chiefly she had with men conversed,
 Men of fresh mind and generous heart,—
 With youth in noble dreams immersed,
 And sages, rich in lore, who erst
 Had dreamt like dreams of life and art ;
 And therefore she more womanly
 And gentle was than other girls
 Whose gossip is with women ; she
 Enshrined in her clear modesty,
 And walking pure amid its perils,
 Was worshipped like a saint, and grew
 More womanly the more she knew.

Here had their widowed mother spent,
 In patient toil, her latter days,
 Days sweetened by a blithe content,
 And by a household love that lent
 Sunshine and song to all her ways ;
 And by respect of all the wise,
 And by the love of all the good,
 And by the faith whose hopes arise,
 Like evening stars in darkening skies,
 Soft-pulsing o'er the dewy wood ;
 And the fine odour of her grace
 Still fondly lingered in the place.

PAUL GAUNT

In the still old town
 Where the minster towers
 Toll the passing hours
 To the chiming College Crown,
 Sat the sister and her brother
 In their quiet room,
 Amid the gathering gloom
 Of murky storm-girt weather ;
 She restless fingers twitching,
 And he absorbed in sketching.
 With a long, low wail
 Moaned the fateful sea,
 Foretelling woeful tale
 Of wreck and misery
 By and by to be :
 And the fisher-women,
 Gathering in bands,
 With the cry of human
 Anguish wrung their hands,
 Gazing seaward ever
 With a yearning and a shiver,
 As they searched the wave and spray
 For the boats that sailed away
 At the dawning of the day.

Deep wrapt up in scheming
 Was his inventive brain,
 While his sister, fondly dreaming,
 Seemed to nurse an aching pain,

And the women's eyes were streaming
Tears upon the sand like rain.
But mastered by the craving
Of inventive thought,
How the sea was raving
Then he heeded not,
Nor how hearts were braving,
Or trembling, at their lot.

On a forehead massive
Brooded thought serene ;
Seemed his face impassive,
And features sharp and lean—
Features thin and pale and lean ;
Fingers long and steady
Held pencil ever ready
For some new machine
Shaping in his brain, I ween.
And her restless fingers twitched
As he brooded on, and sketched,
And the fisher-women gazed
From the sand-dunes, numb and
dazed ;

But he neither felt nor wondered
At the anguish of their pain,
Only silent sat, and pondered !
Tracing o'er and o'er again
Novel figures from his brain.
So he often found relief
From the bitter thought of grief
Which his heart was keen to feel,
But his hand was weak to heal ;
And the world was all forgot
In his novel forms of thought,
Though its passion and its pain
Gave the hint on which he wrought.

Then his sister, turning slowly,
With a wistful melancholy,
As of one with listening weary,
As of one with waiting dreary,
As of one who had a pain
Lying where a joy had lain,
Said, "The sky is wild and eerie,
And I fear there will be sorrow
On the sea, and on the land

A dread of the to-morrow,
And the forms upon the sand.
I am heavy as I think ;
I am dull and scarce know why ;
But I feel as on the brink
Of some unknown misery.
Shall I sing? You must be weary :
And that pencil-scratch is dreary
With its monotone. I'll hum
Something just as it will come,
Something just as it is sent—
Never mind the instrument."

Milly Gaunt's Song—LATE, LATE.

Late, late in May the hawthorn burst
in bloom,
Long searched by chill blasts from the
nipping East ;
Late, late the fire-balls flamed upon
the broom,
And golden-barrèd bees began to feast.

Late, late the bluebells in the forest
glade
Made skyey patches, starred with
primrose sheen,
And lady-ferns, uncoiling in the shade,
Turned serpent-folds to plumes of
waving green.

Late, late the bright fringe tipped the
branching spruce,
And golden fingers sprouted on the pine ;
And June came in before the curls were
loose
Of gay laburnum in the clear sun-
shine.

Late, late they came, but yet they
came at last,
Lilac, laburnum, sweet Forget-me-
not ;
But waiting for my summer, summer
passed
In flowerless hoping, and in fruitless
thought.

Came sunshine to the blossoms and the
flowers,
Came gladness to the earth and wan-
dering bee,
Came balmy airs and dews and tender
showers,
But my spring never came, for ne'er
came he.

Paul.—Why, Milly dear, what is
the matter with you?
There's a crack in your voice, and a
shake in your head,
As if out on the strike, and with
nothing to do,
You had gone to the street with a
baby or two,
And a ballad to sing for your
bread.
Come try something else, and we'll
see what is wrong,
And how that cracked quaver got into
your song.

Milly sings again—ROW, BURNIE,
ROW

Row, burnie, row
Through the bracken-glen;
Row, burnie, row
By the haunts of men;
Where the golden cowslips glint,
Through the wild thyme and the
mint,
By the barley and the lint;
Row, burnie, row.

Row, burnie, row
Tinkling under heather bells;
Row, burnie, row
Down to where my true love
dwells;
Singing songs down to the sea,
Singing of the hill countrie,
Singing to my love from me:
Row, burnie, row.

Row, burnie, row
To him that's far awa,
Row, burnie, row,
And mind him o' us a'.
Say there's naething to regret,
Say I never can forget,
Say I lo'e him dearly yet:
Row, burnie, row.

Row, burnie, row
Through the gowans white,
Row, burnie, row,
Gleaming in the light:
Let ilka ripple bear
Fond kisses to him there;
O my heart it's longing sair,
Row, burnie, row.

Paul.—There, that's how a girl
should sing. I've been forgetting,
While puzzling out notions that no-
body heeds,
Stupid owl that I am! not to see you
were fretting,
While I sit here all day, neither gain-
ing nor getting,
With the fancies an idle head
breeds.
Yet there's something in this one, I
think; but it's true,
I always think that while the fancy
is new.

Milly.—Yes, Paul, I'm sure there
is,
There's always something in it:
Only leave it for a minute,
For it's worse than loneliness
When you sit beside me silent,
Like some shadowy mountain island
Washed by waves I cannot see,
Hid in canopy of clouds,
Peopled too by shining crowds
That speak to you, but not to me.
It's like waiting—don't you see?—
By some veiled mystery.

Don't go back, now, to your schem-
ing;
It will do you good to rest;
Thought will drift away to dreaming
In a brain too hardly pressed:
And this *strike* so long has been
That my little purse grows lean.

Paul.—Ah! the strike!—yes, it's
dreadful, I know: it is war
For the wealth of the rich, but the
life of the poor:
Our new, modern warfare, and holier
far
Than ever was bannered by Cross or
star,
Or battled by hero pure:
It is Capital, gathered on credit, that
stands
Against Capital, gathered in brains
and hands.

I'm a workman, dear, and I mean
to be;
I like the sound of the hammer and
saw,
And the *feel* of a file in my hands, and
to see
Work neatly done, as it ought to be,
Turned out without fault or flaw,
Nut and rivet and nail and screw
All driven home, dear, right and
true.

I hate a fellow that scamps his job,
False work never yet won the day;
I'd sooner footpad it, and steal and
rob,
Or go pick-pocketing through a mob,
Than play that dirty play;
It's the pride of our land that the
work is good
In its wool and cotton, and iron and
wood.

Let us stand by our order, then, fight-
ing it out:
True men they are, in the main, and
right;
The quarrel is good, and our hearts
are stout,
And every one knows what it's all
about,
And our patience is our might:
A fairer wage, and a shorter day,
It is time we had time to think and pray.

Yes, the strike is right: it is war, of
course,
And in war we must count upon rubs
and blows;
And who may be better, and who
may be worse,
Who may be stricken with grief and
remorse,
Only the end shall disclose:
But true to each other, our life will be
more
And fuller and richer than ever
before.

Milly.—Ah! well, I do not know;
I hope it may be so.
But I judge by what I see,
And my heart is failing me.
Have you heard young Darrel's song
Of the famine of the coal?
Some will have it he is wrong,
Though he sings with all his soul,
Till my blood is tingling hot,
Thinking of the poor man's lot.

Song—THE COAL FAMINE

Coal, nor wood, nor peat,
Nothing to put in the grate!
And the east wind hurtling along the
street,
Dashing the windows with rain and
sleet,
And sifting through roofing and slate.

What are the bairns to do,
 With their duds so worn and thin,
 For all the day long, all the night
 through,
 Shaking the soot from the smokeless
 flue,
 The gusts come roaring in?

Oh I miss their noisy din,
 That once had made me scold,
 For now they are sitting so pinched
 and thin,
 With a shiver without, and a gnawing
 within,
 Silent, and dreary and cold.

For there's little to boil or bake,
 Little to roast or fry,
 Little of daylight when we wake,
 Little to do but shiver and shake
 As the chill, dark hours go by.

The great lord's iron heel,
 The rich man's selfish pride
 They were hard to bear; but it's
 worse to feel
 The poor man turning a heart of
 steel
 To the poor man at his side.

Milly.—So Darrel sings his song;
 Some will have it he is wrong,
 Who are also wise and good,
 Yet the poet's eye sees more
 Than is often understood
 By the Reason we adore.
 Listen to the cry bewildering
 Of the women at the doors,
 And the wail of the small children
 Lying hungry on the floors,
 While the lads draw in their breath
 With their lips as white as death.
 Great their patience to endure,
 And if strikes will bring a cure
 To their ills, why, fight it out:
 But for aught that's come about

Hitherto, to me they seem
 The lean kine in Pharaoh's dream,
 Eating up the bigger wage
 By their idleness and debt,
 Hurrying down another stage
 To a sorrow deeper yet.
 Oh I do not understand—
 We women never do—
 But I somehow think the land
 Was kindlier to the hand
 Of the workman long ago,
 When the furnace ne'er was quenched.
 And the work was never flinched,
 Nor the bellows ceased to blow
 On the cinders all aglow.

Paul.—Why, of course, it was,
 Milly: for master and man
 Were brothers, and stood by each
 other then;
 They ate at the same board, and drank
 the same can,
 And the Master *was* master, and true
 artisan,
 And knew all the craft of his men:
 He was not a fellow that handled quills
 With a head for nothing but "doing
 bills."

And his men were men to him, not
 mere hands,
 And their only quarrel was who
 should smite
 The deffest blows where the anvil
 stands;
 And they were not driven by rough
 commands
 Off to the left and right.—
 Ah! a little more human brotherhood
 Would go far to sweeten the work-
 man's mood.

That's what is wrong, dear. The
 wealth of the land
 Comes from the forge and the smithy
 and mine,

From hammer and chisel, and wheel
and band,
And the thinking brain, and the
skilful hand,
And yet we must toil and pine,
That one may be rich by driving
quills,
And a floating credit of Banker's bills.

They call that capital ! it is a lie ;
The capital force of the country still
Is the power of work, the nice-judging
eye,
The brain to perfect machinery,
And the knack of well-trained skill ;
These are the source of all our gains ;
Much your credit will do without
hands and brains.

Just then on the creaking stair
A weary step was heard,
And she started from her chair
With an eager, wistful air,
And her heaving bosom stirred,
But she uttered not a word,
Only drew a long breath in
Till her parted lips grew thin,
Only flushed o'er all her face,
With a look of tender grace,
As a worn and haggard man
Dragged his form into the room,
Coming from the murky gloom
With a ghastly face and wan,
And great eyes all aflame.
Seemed the gaunt and lanky form
Like the spirit of the storm,
Haggard at the work he came
To perform.
Then Paul : " Why, Milly dear,
It is Lyell ; what is wrong ?
He is wet and ill, I fear ;
But we'll give him hearty cheer :
Welcome, brother, come along :
Never welcomer to me
Face of one long lost at sea
Coming unexpectedly."

Austen.—What is wrong, Paul ?
Nothing that I know of ; all is
right.

In this best of possible worlds, how
should anything be wrong ?

All is ordered, man, by perfect love
and wisdom Infinite,

To go smooth as your machinery, and
blithe as Milly's song.

As for me, I have been going up and
down, and to and fro,

Like a personage you've read of in
that queer old Book of Job,

With a tinker, given to drinking, and
his company was low,

But he taught me one or two things
that are happening on our globe ;

And my old professor says nothing's
worthy more of praise

Than an ardent thirst for knowledge
in our curious youthful days.

We camped in woodland corners
'mong the oak scrub and the
broom,

With a clear stream tinkling near us,
and the pine-scents in the air,

And our beds were white and fragrant
with the hawthorn's falling bloom,

And our caldron daily smoking with
the coney and the hare :

These fellows have an eye for the
picturesque and pleasant,

And a gentlemanly taste, too, for
partridge, grouse, and pheasant.

And he taught me no small wisdom,
which is good for human souls,

About the call of night-birds, about
weasels, about moles,

About salmon in their season, and to
track the honey-bee,

About stalking of the red-deer, and
all bird economy,

About tinkering of kettles, and cook-
ery of game,

About doctoring of horses, and trans-
muting of the same,

About spacing people's fortunes, and
breeding in and in,
And also a philosophy that quite gets
rid of sin.
Yet we had to part; and also I hope
never more to meet him,
He was such an arrant scoundrel,
vermin worse than any rat;
And though I'm not particular, I
really had to beat him,
And there's no gospel surer than that
I was right in that.

Now, I want a job of work, Paul; I
have thews and sinews strong,
And the arm that beat the gipsy
might wheel a barrow 'long.
I cannot be a craftsman, I cannot ply
a tool,
I cannot use the chisel and the
hammer and the rule;
I know nothing of your art, lad; but
I could bear a hod,
And handle pick and shovel, and
carry earth and sod.
Will you find me work to do, then?
I am tired of working brains,
Like a treadmill yielding nothing but
my labour for my pains.

A strike among the workmen!
That's unlucky, I confess:
I don't much wonder at it, but I'm
sorry none the less:
Sorry for myself, perhaps; for it
rather mars my scheme;
But like other hopes I've cherished, it
was maybe all a dream:
And I think I feel their troubles even
keener than my own—
I have had so many lately it is not
worth while to moan
For another more or less; one is
stunned upon the wheel

By the first sharp wrench of agony;
the rest you hardly feel:
They are but the after-pains of an
anguish that is past,
Natural throbbings of the sorrow
which your life has overcast.—
Yes, of course, you have the right to
work or idle, as ye will,
To quench the blazing forges, and to
stop the humming mill,
And all the other rights by which you
hope to right your wrongs,
And by and by to turn the people's
sorrows into songs.
Yet there are nobler rights which the
noble only use
In fearfulness and trembling for the
passions they let loose.
Nations have the right of battle—
none more sacred that I know
Than the right to take your weapon,
and to hurl it at your foe,
The right to kill a creature made in
likeness of his God,
To trample a grand being underneath
the reeking sod.
Yet the wanton use of battle is the
shame of history,
Turning back the tide of progress,
and of man's prosperity.
This is now your day of power—and
I am glad that it is yours;
But shall workmen just repeat the sin
of kings and conquerors?
As the nations cease from battle, shall
the classes rouse the fray,
And scatter wanton sorrow for a
shilling more a day?
And what, now, if your fellows,
lounging near the pot-house, idle,
Get to loaf about, and like it, get to
hate both spur and bridle?
Lose the habit of hard labour, with
its manliness; and then
Comes the wreck of all you hope for
in the wreck of noble men?

When you organise a strike, it is war you organise ; But to organise our labour were the labour of the wise, To bind it all together in the bundle of one life, Manifold in gift and service, linked as husband unto wife, With a common fund of skill and thrift. That partly was my thought When I came to you : I dreamt that, if I shared their weary lot, If I got a fustian jacket, and a hammer, and a file, Or wheeled the hodman's barrow, if for nothing better fit, And ate the bread of labour, maybe sweetened with a smile, And faced an earnest Universe as earnestly as It, Then some day they might trust me ; for I know that they are jealous Of the patronage outside them, but will hearken to their fellows Who have laboured at the bench with them, and handled the same tools, And who know the hearts of work- men, that they are not rogues nor fools. Ah ! well ; no matter now ; I dare- say that was all a dream ; But my way of life is changed, Paul ; my sunshine was a gleam Through storm-clouds darkly gather- ing, now the sky is overcast, Like the day there, out of doors, where the rain is pelting fast ; And I somehow cannot hang on to the skirts of the genteel, I would make the change as thorough as the change in heart I feel ; The more obscure my life is the fitter now for me, The more mechanical its toil the happier I shall be ;	Though I look not for much happiness, yet that may also come ; At least I will not whine ; if I have grief I can be dumb. Can you help me, Paul ? I must have work, and yet some leisure too ; Some day I'll tell you more, perhaps —yet wherefore burden you ? Enough ; I must have leisure, for I have a task to do. Paul, with sorrow, caught the tone Of the sorrow of his friend ; Yet he made as if its moan Were a thing for mirth alone, And it seemed that he would spend All his shafts of homely wit And of ridicule on it. To think of Lyell with a file Grinding slowly at a wheel ! Or with hod of lime or tile, Tramping where the gangways reel ! Or smiting with a hammer, 'Mid the clangour and the clamour Of the anvil and the bellows And the smithy, and the fellows Who can nothing more than play Mighty hammers, day by day ! He, the scholar of his year, Knowing Latin, knowing Greek, Knowing all you'd care to hear, Knowing all that sages speak Of number and of form, Of the laws that guide the storm, Of fluids and their powers, And of how they may be ours !— Laughing light, and chuckling low As he tossed it to and fro, Paul kept playing with the thought, Mocking at it, scorning it, Jesting with the kind of wit Which a loving heart will hit, Though of humour knowing nought. Then he said that one who knew him Had lately spoken to him Something about editing
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A newspaper—which, of course,
Was ridiculous, and worse—
But it was the very thing
For Austen with his free
Flowing pen, and fresh discourse.
Oh the pleasure it would be,
Reading leaders every night
Sparkling with a modern light,
Yet with wisdom from the ages
Mellowing all the thoughtful pages !
Would not Milly surely like
Austen's papers on the strike ?
And perhaps himself might pen
Just a letter now and then.

In silence Austen heard,
Never uttering a word,
But the strong lip gave a quiver,
And his head bowed very low,
And there was a tremulous shiver,
Like the ripple on a river
When a passing wind doth blow,
And the tears began to flow—
Tears that sorrow failed to bring,
But the touch of love unsealed,
Like the coming of a spring
That awoke the heart it healed.
And the others did not speak,
For they knew that words are weak
As the drip of falling rain
'Mid the silence of our pain,
And in his grief they saw
Something touching them with awe,
Something more than natural grief,
Something more than met the eye,
Something mad for the relief
Of a helpful sympathy.
Now, because the strain was o'er,
He yielded to the throng
Of better thoughts that rushed along
Through every open door,
And every chamber of his mind,
Uncontrolled and unconfined.
Wild, without, the wind was roaring,
Wild, without, the rain was pouring,
Battering on the window pane ;

And the sullen waves were crashing
Loud amid the angry dashing
Of the drifting sleet and rain.
Wild the anguish of his pain,
Yet they bade it not to cease,
For it was the way of peace.

Left alone, ere long, she went
Softly to her instrument,
Touched a chord or two, and then
Deftly warbled forth a strain,
Not without its shade of pain.

*Milly (alone) sings—*SO SHE WENT
DRIFTING

So she went drifting, drifting
Over the sea,
Thinking that others were shifting ;
Surely not she.
She no anchor had lifted,
Meant not to move ;
Only she slowly drifted
Deep into love.

Oh she had held that a maiden
Should not be first
To sigh with a heart love-laden,
And long and thirst ;
And mad at herself for her longing,
Hard things she said,
Then was mad at herself for wronging
The love she had.

He knew not how she was yearning
Just for a word,
And went on his way discerning
Nothing he heard :
Only he sometimes wondered
What she could mean—
Oh had he only pondered
He might have seen.

So she went drifting, drifting
Day after day ;
So he went shifting, shifting,
Farther away ;

Oh but a word would have done it—
 Word never spoken ;
 So she went drifting, drifting
 With her heart broken.

BOOK FIFTH

VISITORS

THAT night, though the storm was still
 raging,
 Austen and Paul went forth,
 Arm in arm, braving the rain, and the
 chill roaring wind from the North ;
 It was nine on the Minster-clock as
 they knocked at a staring green
 door,—
 Grass-green it of the brightest,—and
 a big brass plate on it bore
 The name, Andrew Downie, Esquire,
 in letters readable, large,
 All staring out of the panel, shining
 and big as a targe.
 Yet he was kindly and human, a
 plump, little man by the fire,
 Slippered and cheery, drawing the
 wine and the walnuts nigher,
 Not without kettle on hob, not without
 spirit-case too,
 For an easy bachelor evening, lonely,
 with nothing to do :
 Prosy and garrulous he, and his face
 brightened gladly to see
 Paul and his student friend come to
 give him their company.

ANDREW DOWNIE, Esq.

Try the port, sir ; it ought to be good,
 It cost me a mint of money ;
 It's been twenty years out of the wood,
 With a taste of the olives it should
 Go down just like new milk and honey.

I bought it in, let me say,
 When we sold up old Drummeller ;
 He was famed for his wines in his day,
 And the Duke carried half away,
 But the rest came to my poor cellar.

It was I that wound up his affairs,
 And a pretty mess they were in :
 He had gone on 'Change, and the bears
 Turned his acres quickly to shares ;
 They'd have robbed him soon of his
 skin.

He was bit with the railways first,
 And then he went in for mines,
 Wheal-Bwbl, Wheal Dydl, Wheal
 Wuhurst,—
 I lost a big thing when they burst ;
 But they smashed him clean off the lines.

We sold him up for a song
 To a stupid stocking-weaver ;
 I always thought we were wrong :
 And he did not hold out long—
 Heart, they said—but it was his liver.

Had we waited, instead of a loss,
 He might have been good for a
 million ;
 There was shale in those acres of moss,
 The laird and his pony would cross,
 With his wife sticking fast to the
 pillion.

I told them to wait ; peats may blaze,
 But they don't fly away in a hurry :
 But money was tight in those days,
 And the Banks took to watching your
 ways,
 So we sold, like fools, in a flurry.

Well, I bought in his port, as I said,
 And it's sound every bottle as yet,
 Every cork with a wig on its head,
 And a bouquet might quicken the dead,
 Or savour a bailie with wit.

But you sip it as if you were stung ;
 You'd prefer it perhaps with more body ?
 Old port for old fellows ; the young
 Like the smack of the wood and
 the bung,
 Or even the flavour of toddy.

Not drink ! and a man in your line !
 Well, I don't set up for a teacher,
 But a lad that don't take to his wine
 Will not do for a learnèd divine,
 Or a popular, orthodox preacher.

All the sound, solid parsons, I wist,
 Drink their port with a kindly good
 will ;
 But your cold water dulls them like mist,
 Or they get some heretical twist,
 And go on, like the clack of a mill.

Oh, you're not in the preaching way ;
 You have come here about the news-
 paper ;
 But these Editor fellows, they say,
 Must be soaked, like a wick, half
 the day
 Ere they light up their evening taper.

Well ; I'd not have believed it before
 That so many men of ability
 Could be standing about by the score,
 Looking out for an open door,
 And a job with a little gentility.

Look there, at that huge pile of
 letters :—
 And that's not the half I am sure :—
 All scholars, sir, greatly my betters,
 All versed in political matters,
 And Science and Literature.

What a wealth of brains there must be
 In this fine old country of ours,
 Which nobody ever can see,
 Till he advertises like me
 For a man of "original powers."

One has written reviews for the
 Times,
 One, paragraphs for the *Spectator*,
 One encloses a copy of rhymes,
 And another, he rings the chimes
 On an "Own Correspondent's" letter.

And there's none of them but would
 as soon
 Criticise the Almighty as not,
 And see that the angels kept tune,
 And watch that the sun and the moon
 Do not squander the light they
 have got.

Clever fellows, Sir, wonderful clever !
 But I want an original mind ;
 And these run in the same rut for ever,
 Differing only in state of the liver,
 And amount of lungs for wind.

You see, I have nothing to do :
 I made a bit money, and stopt,
 Then I tried this and that, with a view
 Of getting some happiness too,
 Ere my blossom of life was cropt.

I had hard lines, most of my days,
 Rose just, as they say, from the gutters,
 Knew little of children's plays,
 Or country-folk and their ways,
 Since I learnt how to take down the
 shutters.

We are all of us self-made here ;
 So is every one worth his meat ;
 And I don't know I ever was near
 So happy and proud as the year
 That I swept the rooms tidy and neat.

Then I thought myself something.
 I'd stop
 And laugh, 'mid the dust right out,
 Looking down on the boys in a shop ;
 And oh what a glory of Hope
 Seemed floating then all round about !

Well, I made some money, and then
I thought I would travel a while ;
That enlarges the mind of men ;
So they say, but nine out of ten
Might as well sit and swing on a stile.

Those French fellows gabbled so fast
I could not make out what they said,
And they shrugged and smiled, and
went past,
When I spoke their own tongue, till
at last
I was well-nigh losing my head.

So I wearied of big empty Kirks,
And cafés and pictures and shows,
And the old German towns with
their Storks,
And Rome with its wonderful works,
And the Alps with their guides and
snows.

Enlarge my mind, did you say ?—
Not a bit, Sir ; I came as I went !
It was six months of wearisome play,
And some photographs got by the way,
And food, like a long fast in Lent.

After that, I bought an estate,
Running still in a rut like the rest ;
I had better have bought a bad debt,
For my money ran down like a spate,
And my bogs grew an absolute pest.

Rural life, lads, is all a mistake,
Seeing nothing but grass fields and
botany,
And sleek, stupid cows half awake ;
And the birds your morning sleep break,
And weary you with their monotony.

I used to go sauntering round,
And stare at my turnip drills,
Or watch the old crows as they found
Twisting worms in the fresh-ploughed
ground,
Or the shadows flit over the hills.

But what human soul could exist
On a vision of shadows and crows,
And the trailing of clouds and mist,
Or the thought of the worms as they
twist
Where the turnip or mangold grows ?

So I filled with fish-tackle red books,
Sticking flies round my hat out and in ;
But the trout picked the bait from
my hooks,
And sniffed at my flies in their nooks,
Though they jumped to a boy's
crooked pin.

Well, of all stupid sports that I know
The absurdest is catching your fish,
Getting tired as you walk to and fro,
Getting wet, too, for nothing, although
A sixpence would get you a dish.

As to shooting, no bird would remain
For a good steady shot ; but as fast
As the pointers would point, they
were fain,
To be off, and I peppered in vain
As they rose with a whirl, and flew past.

No ; the country is stupid, or worse ;
The mice would get drowned in the
cream,
And then—no butter of course,
Or something went wrong with your
horse,
Or the eggs vanished off like a dream.

In the country I never could get
What the country is meant to produce ;
But I got in a hank of debt,
Till I advertised it to let,
Or to go, if it must, to the deuce.

Ah ! the town, lads, for me ! I
don't care
Though I never see grass or tree,
Nor leave the old market square,
For there's true life and motion there,
Just to stand on the pavement and see

Rural women with butter on blades,
Fisher-women with loaded creel;
How they chaffer with wives and
maids!

How they storm through the varying
shades

Of the passion they feign to feel!

You should see the gardeners too,
With their carrots and nosegays red:
Their gardens always do—

And there's nothing you want but you
Shall find there, living or dead.

Then on Fair-days and hiring-days
—Ah!

It's as good as a play to be there,
As the ploughman jogs up with a straw
In his hat, and the lasses guffaw
At the jokes that are rife in the Fair.

Or on great days, just to see
The trades all out in procession,
The man who is armed *cap-à-pie*,
And Adam and Eve, and the Tree,
And the Serpent, and all the Tempta-
tion!

Oh, life, lads, there's nothing like life,
The stir and crush of the folk,
The bargaining, beering, and strife,
And the small boys with trumpet or fife,
And the gingerbread and the rock!

They talk of the fine country air,
But it never agreed with me;
I'm a town-bird, you see, and don't care
For the daisies and butter-cups there,
As I do for the dulse and the sea.

As for walks—what walk could you take
Like a stroll to the point of the pier,
To watch how the long tangles shake,
And the gull and the kittiwake
Dive and bob till your dinner hour's
near?

But the Newspaper! well, here am I
In the town, and with nothing to do,
And I hear it is going to die
Of a Radical scamp who must try,
Forsooth, a halfpenny Review.

Now, the paper is part of the Town;
It would not be the same place with-
out it;

I'd as lief the kirk-steeple fell down:
Let it cost me a plack or a crown,
We'll print it, sir, never you doubt it.

It was always here, as I say,
Coming out every week like the
Sunday;

Quite enough too; I can't see a way
To have accidents fresh every day,
Or eclipses each Friday and Monday.

But business is business, and so
We must make it pay, if we can,
And I want one whose pen will
not go

In a rut of set phrases, you know,
But a real original man.

As to politics, them I don't mind;
They go round and round like a jig;
I'm a Tory myself, but I find
Nothing pays so well as a kind
Of steady respectable Whig.

You may gird at the parsons a bit,
They've got Sunday all to themselves,
And don't spare their hearers a whit,
But I won't have an infidel wit,
Like that fellow Voltaire on the
shelves.

I'm not pious—I never had time,
Though I learned all the Proverbs at
school,

And some of the Psalms too in rhyme,
And I know that Isaiah's sublime,
And the Parables beautiful.

You must let religion alone ;
 I'll have nought of the infidel kind,
 We must write in a sound moral tone,
 And not like that halfpenny drone,
 But with fresh original mind.

And the main thing after all,
 Must be always the Town's affairs—
 How the Provost keeps up the ball,
 And the names the Town-Councillors
 call
 Each other, and nobody cares.

Then the shipping, and harbour dues,
 And what's to be done with the bar,
 And the kirks with their empty pews,—
 Oh, there's plenty of capital news
 For the paper, without going far.

Then there's accidents, railway smashes,
 And how the poor shareholder smarts,
 And the folk struck by fierce lightning-
 flashes,
 And now and then mercantile crashes,
 Or children run over by carts :

There's the Circuit-Courts, and the
 Member,
 And the soirees wound up with a dance,
 And the College, of course, in
 November,
 And the woman the Queen will
 remember,
 With her three little babies at once.

There's the stocking-trade, and the
 police,
 The catch of herrings and whales,
 And the cost of the wool in the fleece ;
 Who cares about war or peace
 When our fishers have stormy gales ?

If you like, you may give us a claver
 About folk of the Town long ago,
 Or a song with some body and flavour,
 Though I don't deny that I never
 Read poems, unless I don't know.

What we want is the news of the Town
 To know all about ourselves clearly ;
 Now, I like your looks, I own,
 And I don't care although I comedown,
 With a hundred-and-fifty yearly.

There, I'm tired of these long-winded
 scrawls ;
 Each harder to read than the other ;
 Oh, they're all of them Peters and Pauls,
 Apostles of Wisdom that calls
 In the streets, always making a pother.

But you have some sense, for you can
 Be silent while others are speaking ;
 Now, I've told you all of my plan,
 Only mind, it is always a man
 Of original powers I am seeking.

When they came out to the street,
 Austen burst into a shout
 Of such riotous, loud laughter, which
 he strove to check in vain,
 That neighbours to the windows came
 with curious peering out,
 As peal on peal rung, echoing, till the
 mirth grew very pain,
 And when he would have ceased, it
 only louder rose again.

Why, Paul, he said, at length, you'll
 kill me with that solemn look :
 Don't you know, man, I'm an editor,
 and real "original"—
 A respectable Whig Editor, with a
 right to bring to book
 The Provost and the parsons and the
 halfpenny Radical,
 And to freely criticise all the local and
 the small ?

Original powers of mind, Paul, to tell
 the catch of herrings,
 And the nosegays of red carrots, and
 the current price of wool,
 To describe the hiring markets, and
 the lasses, and their fairings,

And profound examinations of our
learned grammar school,
And the doings of the Councillors who
call each other fool ?

Was there ever luck like mine ?—and
I just come from playing tinker !
Oh the fresh thoughts I shall utter about
the whaling ships !
If the Bailies only knew that a true
original thinker
Was to criticise their speeches, and
their little snacks and trips !
And how that halfpenny Radical shall
sink in dark eclipse !

There's my destiny at last found, in
this queer Universe,
To play respectable Whig on a
hundred-and-fifty a-year ;
A man of powers original paid duly
to rehearse
The condition of the weather and the
Provost, who, I hear,
Is a man of no condition, and a brewer
of small beer.

Well, we come into this world, wrapt
up in superfine cocoon,
Soft and silky, and our business is to
reel it off again,
And to know ourselves but worms, and
care for nought beneath the moon,
But to look about for what will eat, and
eat it there and then,
And get rid of all fine feelings, and
high dreams of gods and men.

I've been winding my cocoon off quite
rapidly of late,
And am very nearly naked, and ready
to devour
All that I can set my teeth too—and
I am not delicate—
Heaven and earth, they say, shall pass
away, like fading autumn flower,

But my heaven is gone, and earth
alone has gript me with its power.

Is it worth while living longer after
you have reached the stage
When life at last is possible, and you
are purged of all
The nobler thoughts you cherished,
and the hopes of a great age,
Coming with diviner visions to reverse
the early Fall,
And the soul is fairly harnessed to the
local and the small ?

Ah ! if one could only leave it, ere all
higher dreams have left !
Could but die before the death of that
which is our life indeed !
Could cease to be or ever one is utterly
bereft
Of that gleam of something better,
which may chance to be the seed
Of a hope for human hearts, when ours
shall cease to beat and bleed !

Nay, I do not rave and maunder ; I
am not a love-sick boy
Whose life is all washed out, while he
is whining through his teens ;
But there's that has come upon me,
which has taken all the joy
From my being ; and when one has
lost the staff on which he leans—
Well, he finds that he is lame, and
maybe knows not what it means.

Perhaps I'll tell you more, Paul, on
some day by and by.

Perhaps I'll keep my sorrow to myself
—I cannot tell ;

I know that I can trust you ; but then
I know not why

I should bind upon your spirit that
which binds me like a spell,
Or lay on you my crushing burden,
crushing you as well.

I am weary, oh how weary! of all
 beneath the sun;
 There's no nature in my laughter, and
 no sweetness in my thought,
 I seem to have no Faith or Hope; my
 lights have one by one
 Died out, and left an evil smoke: God
 help me, I am not
 Good company this evening; better
 leave me to my lot.

BOOK SIXTH

MILLY GAUNT

AFTER they left, she sat a little while,
 Now brooding thoughtful, now with
 flickering smile
 Playing about her lips, and in her
 eyes,
 As the flame flickered in the fire
 likewise,
 And leaped up in the curling smoke,
 or lay
 Over the coal and purred itself away.
 Thus she a while to happy fancies
 yielding
 A willing tribute of sweet castle-
 building,
 Saw in the gleaming coal a hero strong,
 And a fond lover, and a blissful throng
 Of varied circumstance and generous life,
 When maiden blossom fruited into
 wife;
 Till looking up, behold an hour had
 passed!
 And wondering how the time had
 flown so fast,
 She wondered on a little more, to know
 If still the happy clock as quick
 would go
 When fancies grew to facts, and she
 should be
 All that the fire had pictured curiously;

Then starting up, went tripping down
 the stair,
 Singing with cheerful heart a light-
 some air—

A lightsome air about the gallant lad,
 Who fired the heather with his white
 cockade.

High beauty her's: a face as marble
 white,
 Shaded with glossy braids as black as
 night,
 But full of health, and clear in-
 telligence,
 And cultured grace, and woman's
 delicate sense.

A noble, generous spirit, meet to be
 The helpmeet of a noble destiny,
 Strong in all duty, in ambition high,
 Open in thought, and broad in
 sympathy,
 With nothing little, save the little ways
 Which brighten home, and are a
 woman's praise.

All day she had been teaching in
 the school,
 And still at night, though weary of
 the rule
 Of noisy mirth and sullen dulness, she
 Had work to do, and did it cheer-
 fully—
 Training deft fingers to the finest
 chords,
 And wedding the flute-voice to liquid
 words
 Of Scottish song, or German *lieder*
 good,
 Or roundelay of France for gayer mood.
 She had the artist soul and artist voice,
 And in the gift of song she would
 rejoice
 As doth the skylark trilling forth
 its lay
 At leary dawn and noon and close
 of day.

Thus giving lessons in the evening, she
Lightened home cares by that loved
industry.

A bright young girl, as glad as summer
air,
A laughing rosy girl, with sunny hair
That loosely rayed about a joyous face
Like a gold glory, tripped with win-
some grace
About her room, when Milly entered
singing,
And picked a letter up, and gaily
flinging
It to the ceiling, caught it as it fell,
And danced about, and tossed it high
and well.

“A letter, a letter, Miss Milly, a
letter!
Now don’t stiffen up so, as if you
knew better
Than to care for a letter that’s all
about you—
Such a wonderful letter, and every
word true!
And it makes you a lady—but you’re
that, dear, already—
But it makes you out clearly a some-
thing that’s nearly
As good as a Princess, my own
Cinderella,
Who trots every night, with that
horrid umbrella,
Through the sleet and the slush to
poor me who am nothing
But a commonplace lassie with nought
of romance.
But I always felt sure that you went
home to dance
With the beautiful Prince who was
fuming and frothing,
Till you came to the ball: and now
it’s all true!
And it’s all in the letter that’s all
about you,

Which came to my father this
evening, and he
Wished you to read it, and gave it to
me.”

And Milly read the letter, all amazed,
Now and then wondering if her wits
were dazed,
And if she read aright; then read again,
The double reading doubling all her
pain.

It came from Lawyer in a country town
To Lawyer in the city, and set down
The facts in business order, plain and
clear;

How in our quiet glens a lady here
Died somewhat suddenly not long
agone,

And left estates unto an only son.
They were not hers by right, and yet
by law

Her title was most sure, without a flaw;
Freely she might enjoy them while
she breathed,

Freely she might bequeath them, as
bequeathed.

He knew the facts, for he had drawn
the will,

And Austen Lyell’s claim was good
as skill

Could frame a legal deed to sanction
wrong,

And rob the orphan, which had grieved
him long;

Yet had he only done as he was bound,
Giving his clients valid law and sound.

Now at the funeral this son went mad,
Insulted kith and kin, was wholly bad;

Mocked at the minister, and laughed
at Heaven,

Was barely civil to his lawyer even,
And gathered all the rogues and
beggars near

To eat the feast made for his mother’s
bier:

Inexplicable, unless of reason reft. Then on the morrow afterwards he left, No orders given, no charge to anyone, No single duty of a landlord done ; Nor had they since heard from him. He was seen, Indeed, that morning on the hillside green Beside a lonesome tarn, and for some days Walked with a gipsy poacher in wild ways, Thigging and sorning. They had dragged the mere And found enough to make his mad- ness clear— The Hall-keys in a bunch, rusty and brown, Also the Will that made the place his own, Which no sane man could leave in such a place ; But of himself they had not any trace. Some thought him dead, but most believed him mad, Some held it a good riddance, others sad ; However that might be, he had to say The next heir, who was true heir, went away Twentyodd years ago, and had been wed To Gerald Gaunt, and both of them were dead, But there were children ; so, at least, 'twas said. Now, would the city lawyer look about, And make inquiries, and resolve the doubt ? Were Austen dead, they were the next of kin ; If mad, as he believed, from pride and sin, They would have rights to see to, and the Trust Would charge itself with what was right and just :	The lands were good, and free from bond and debt, And some loose monies too there were to get ; Could he but find the children any way Of Gerald Gaunt and Borland's "Bonnie May." She closed the letter with a moan of pain : His name was there, and burned into her brain,— His name, who was her secret glory and pride ; And yet she could not say he was belied, And cast the misery from her, as the Saint Shook off the poisonous viper ; she was faint, And sick at heart, and rose, and said, "Good-night ; These are strange tidings, and my head seems light." "How could he ? Oh, how could he ?" still she said, "My dream of life is gone, my hope is dead, Torn like the honey-bag from humble bee, Nought left me but a short, sharp agony. How could he ?—And my brother loved him so, So trusted him in all of weal or woe, So held him stainless of ignoble thought, The truest friend that ever true life brought !— Oh, it is not the loss of heritage That makes life poor ; it is that, stage by stage, Some leave us with a lessening faith in man, And less of love than when our life began,
--	---

Till one day all our shining heaven
 shall tell
 But how the stars once shone, and
 how they fell.
 How could he?—And I held him
 hero true,
 Trained by the age for what the age
 must do,
 Full of its spirit, loyal to its hopes,
 And past the stage in which it
 only gropes;
 A man whom God had ready, when
 they say,
 Where is the Leader who shall guide
 our way?
 I thought that truth and right was all
 he craved,
 And that for truth and right all risks
 he braved,
 And that he had a noble wisdom
 proved;
 And so I loved him—but 'twas this
 I loved.
 How could he? Oh, how could he?"
 still she said,
 "My dream of life is gone, my hope
 is dead."

And so when they came jesting up
 the stair,
 And, tickled with quaint fancies, even
 there
 A moment paused to let their mirth
 explode,
 Their laughter jarred on her, and
 made her load
 Press on the sore, till of the sore
 were born
 Some bitter thoughts, and biting words
 of scorn.

Sure, of a sudden, they were wondrous
 merry;
 She had not thought such grief could
 be so cheery

In so short space; but 'twas a healthy
 power
 That healed a breaking heart in half
 an hour;
 Easy to break, easy to bind again,
 'Twas pity to waste pity on such pain;
 So children wept and laughed, and
 that was good
 But men she wist had been of sterner
 mood:—
 She understood not; she was dull,
 no doubt;
 But saw not what there was to jest
 about;
 It looked to her a noble task for one
 To chronicle the common life of man,
 To tell the daily sorrows of the poor,
 To mirror all the ills that they endure,
 To watch the tide of mind, and guide
 its flow,
 To speak brave words that made the
 brave heart glow.
 It was the man made service great or
 small,
 For still the noble soul ennobled all
 It touched, and little natures made
 it less.
 And a great heart was throbbing in
 the Press
 Which was the prophet's roll of
 modern man,
 And faithful record, he might read
 who ran.
 But then, of course, it was a jest
 to think
 A man of wealth should waste his
 time and ink
 On such mean tasks; and yet she
 once had hoped—
 No matter what her hope was—there
 she stopped.

Why, Milly, what is wrong? her
 brother said.
 And she uplift again the drooping
 head

Which had, a moment, sunk at that
sad look

That seemed to read her like an
open book :

Nothing, of course, is wrong ; what
could be wrong ?

I think that was the burden of
the song

Which your friend sung about the
Universe.

Of course, it is beneath him to rehearse
The common things of common folk,

or right

The wrongs which are not, or which
are so light.

Then he :

“ Yes, Milly Gaunt, I said all that ;

In bitterness of soul I uttered what

You echo now in sharper tones than
mine,

Big words of little wisdom ; undivine
Because inhuman ; yet they were not

barbed

To rangle, nor in mockery were
garbed ;

They were not good words to re-
member, yet

They were not words to move a
deep regret.

No matter — they were foolish ; I
am well

Rebuked for speech that, like the hot
sparks, fell

From burning passion, being fiercely
smote,

And sputtering words when all un-
apt for thought.

But there is more behind this wrath
of thine

Than any wild, blind, erring speech
of mine.

What is it, Milly ? Why this bitter
blame ?

I came to you in sorrow and broken
shame,

And untried poverty, and utter need,
Thinking you would not break the
bruised reed ;

For there had fallen on me a hapless fate,
A knowledge that has made life
desolate,

As when the iceberg drifts on some
green shore,

Clasping its wooded bays, and bend-
ing o'er

Its sunny meadows, till it lose itself,
Melting on sandy beach, and rocky

shelf,

But blighting all the bright flowers
with its breath,

And wrapping all the scene in waste-
ful death.

So had my hope all withered by the fact
Which drifted on me, without will
or act

Of mine, and clung to me, and will
not part

Till its death-chill has frozen all
my heart.

And when my soul was wrung with
its sharp pain,

And troubled thoughts were tangling
all my brain,

You touched me almost unto hope again.

For that, I thank you : what has
changed your mood

I know not, but I owe you only good.
In such a gloom even briefest gleam

of light

Is something, though it sink in deeper
night :

And what of joy your life has shed
on mine

And peace and hope be doubly poured
on thine.”

Deep toned his voice and trembling
as he spoke,

And its great sorrow answering chords
awoke,

And almost all her angry purpose broke ;

For it was ringing with the truth
sincere,
And deep humility, and she could hear
Her heart beat with the beat of
perfect faith
In all he said, which made her pale
as death,
And sick at heart, to think that she
perchance
Wronged the true soul by misjudged
circumstance.
So she:
"This sorrow that you may not tell,
Did it concern my brother who loves
you well?"
"Nay, surely not; nor part nor lot
has he
In my life, saving in the best of me:
Dear Paul! was never sunshine to a
scene
More than his fellowship to me has been.
But if you care to hear, perhaps
'twere well
The story of a broken life to tell;
For broken it is, like foam upon
the sea
Caught by the wind, and scattered
aimlessly."
Knitting his brows, and gathering up
his thought,
With lips compressed to hide the pain
that wrought
And quivered in them, for a while
he gazed
In brooding silence where the faggot
blazed.
Then in low tones: "I know not how
to speak—
If I say little you will deem me weak;
If I say more, the more will only blight
Another name to set my own name
right.
Sometimes the half is better than
the whole,
And sometimes worse than none; the
dubious soul

Suspects the secret there in what is hid,
And holds the rest but trash. I
am forbid,
By that which is more sacred than
my right,
To tell you much—to tell you all I
might.
There are some sorrows cannot be
subjected
To man's construction, — howsoe'er
suspected."
And here he paused a while, and,
brooding, gazed
Again in silence where the faggot
blazed.
But Paul said, Never mind, now; let
it be;
Milly was wrong; I never doubted thee;
She will be sorry ere to-morrow come.
But she apart, biting her lip, and dumb,
With vehement finger crushed a harm-
less crumb.
Then he again:
"You hold me rich and proud,
Miss Gaunt, and scornful of the
common crowd,
Which never was a common crowd
to me,
And now less so than ever, for I see
No hope for me except in hope for those
Who stir your pity with their un-
voiced woes.
I too am poor—once reckoned heir
of all
A goodly pastoral land, a pleasant
Hall,
And the respects and honours which
they bring;
But think not I for these am sorrowing.
I had no peace until I cast away
A claim that could not bear the light
of day,
The deed of law that was a deed of sin,
Which now is gone to pulp and
blotches in

The water-lilied haunt of tern and coot,
Or folds its slush around the brown
sedge-root.

But life is poor when its old faiths
are gone,

Poorest when man can trust himself
alone."—

She started, for it was her own sad
thought

He echoed, though he touched a
deeper note ;

But silence kept, as he went on to tell
How he had sworn to one who loved
him well

An oath he feared to break, and dared
not keep,

Which haunted him by day, and
banished sleep

With stony horrors from his nights,
till he

Was nigh distraught with his great
misery.

Enough ; what Milly said was just
and true ;

There was a noble work which one
might do,

Wielding a truthful pen with heart
sincere,

In days whose change was big with
hope and fear ;

But he must find the heirs of Bor-
land's May ;

And then no doubt but Heaven would
guide his way.

Then she rose pale and trembling, and
her eyes

Quailed at his glance of questioning
surprise ;

"Can you forgive me ?" piteously she
pled,

"I wronged you in my heart, yet my
heart bled

To wrong you ; and it was not with
my will :

Yet my heart wronged you—Oh I
have done ill.

Our mother was May Borland ; and
I feared"—

He heard no more ; for never sky
was cleared

Of close-piled clouds by April wind
and sun,

Unravelling swift what they before
had spun,

So suddenly as he from utter sadness,
Sodden and dreary, passed into a

gladness
Of joyous gratulation, that forgot

All but the whole relief her words had
brought.

Oft in their childhood had their
mother told,

In the long winter evenings dark and
cold,

Of Borland nestling in its bosk of trees,
Of the great lime filled with the hum

of bees,
Of the tall orchard wall with ivy clad,

Where dainty nests the merle and
throstle had,

Of the three waters blending in the
river

Near where the red-roofed mill was
clacking ever,

Of the long windings of the narrow glen
The water-lilied pool and water-hen ;

And how the Borlands had been lairds
of all

Since the wild Scots drave at the
Roman Wall ;

And how her joyous girlhood had
been there,

Honoured and petted still as Bor-
land's heir ;

And how the goodly heritage was lost
All for her love, nor did she grudge

the cost,
Or only for her children sometimes

grieved,
And for her father's love, which

was deceived.

These tales the children heard with
 ear intent;
 Children are fain to know how
 mothers spent
 Their childhood, and to chatter of
 the day
 When the grave matron was as blithe
 as they,
 And went a-nutting through the
 autumn woods,
 Or twined her daisy chain, or sought
 the nestling broods.
 And Milly, in her secret thoughts,
 would dream
 That some day she should look on hill
 and stream,
 And trace her mother's footsteps
 o'er again,
 With Paul as Laird of all the long
 green glen.
 But he, impatient, called her little fool!
 To set her heart on sleepy hill and
 pool,
 Where life is always only half awake;
 And dreams, he said, are fetters hard
 to break;
 Though they be only shadows you
 have made,
 The life seems passing when the
 shadows fade.
 As for myself, could any man of sense
 Abide a dull laird's easy indolence,
 Whose talk is all of cattle, turnip field,
 And what the hay crop, what the oats
 will yield,
 And how to keep the rabbits and
 the hares
 From midnight poacher cunning with
 his snares?
 I will be lord of nothing but my mind,
 I will be held of nothing that can bind
 To vacant drowsiness the busy brain,
 Or dull the sense of pleasure or of pain.
 My days must be where thought has
 stedfast rule.
 And skilful fingers deftly ply the tool,

And life is growing to a higher sense
 Of God's design and man's omni-
 potence.
 So would he silence her: but all
 the more
 She cherished in her heart a secret
 store
 Of hopes; and now the time had
 come when she
 Saw all she fondly dreamt about to be;
 But the bright cloud which gleamed,
 afar, like gold,
 Felt now as mist about her dim and cold,
 Or draggled robes that round her
 limbs enfold.
 Silent she sat, and humbled and
 ashamed,
 And much herself she questioned,
 much she blamed,
 More than was meet, for woman's
 penitent course
 Is prone to low prostrations of remorse.
 Close in her bosom that hard letter
 lay,
 And seemed to burn, and waste her
 life away:
 O cursèd letter! O unhappy day!
 "What should I do?" thus in her
 heart she said;
 "For what love hides is raised as from
 the dead
 Some day, and kills the love which
 covered it,
 And frankest truth is more than subtle
 wit:—
 But it will pain him knowing that
 I know;
 And oh the shame! that I should
 judge him so!
 But Paul, you will be noble still, and
 true
 To the high thought that always
 guided you?"—
 Then Paul, unconscious of a great
 intent,
 But simply natural, following the bent

Of a true heart, and fine instinct of skill, Said: "Milly, you may go now if you will, Turn a fine lady, eat and drink the best, Drive in your carriage, lord it like the rest; You've always had a leaning that way; I Would rather live till nature bids me die, Would rather die than thrive upon the wreck Of one I loved." Here falling on his neck, She hugged and kissed him, vowing ne'er to part, He had so true a soul, so brave a heart. But Austen: "You must do, Paul, as you will; The land is yours, with duties to fulfil— An heritage which, being lost, implies Loss of high opportunity likewise, Loss of ancestral love which clings to you, Loss of a work which only he can do Who has men's heart, already on his side, Looking to him, and willing to confide. Think, Paul, your heritage is more than fields Of grass and corn, and what the woodland yields, 'Tis something which could never have been mine. The love of all the people which will twine The closer round you from the sense of wrong, Righted at last, which you have suffered long. And there is something in the love our folk Bear to the scion of an ancient stock,	May be, unreasonable, may be, more Worthy than things there are good reasons for, But beautiful, at least, and in its trust Nobler than money-bargaining and lust. What of your commune, with its spade and hoe To till the field, where every man should grow Enough for simple life, and still the loud, Gaunt clamours of the swarming city's crowd? Have I not heard you wisely eloquent On lonely glens which only deer frequent, Once filled with homesteads, furrowed by the plough, And clothed with rustling grain and fruitful bough, And how the men whose fathers owned it went, With breaking hearts, to far-off banishment: And bore to rolling prairies in the West A rankling sense of wrong in many a breast, Which made our nation's foes the men who loved it best? Surely you will not cast from you the power To test your cherished thought, and nip the flower When it is at the fruiting. As for me, I have thrown off a load of misery. You call it wreck—I call it haven at last, Where, bruised and battered, but the danger past, I am at peace. Paul, I have felt the strain Of sharp temptation, and the aching pain Of cold and hunger, and of discontent With all myself had done, or God had sent;
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I have not known the sleep of a right mind, Or ate or drank with honest human kind, Or felt as if I dared, until this night ; And you, Paul, would you quench the dawning light That tips my cloud with silver, and breaks in With better hope on this dark world of sin ? Now I have found my work, good work and true, And I have found the heart good work to do, Milly was right ; it is the man who makes Noble or mean the task he undertakes, Who breathes a godlike spirit into that He has to do, or makes it stale and flat. I see my work before me, and my way Free from embarrassment, and clear as day, Bright with a throng of hopeful services That stir within me with a sense of bliss,	Needing but righting of this wrong to be The tide of a new life of joy in me.” He looked at Milly here, and she at him, And as she looked, she felt her eyes grow dim With something gathering in them, then looked down, Conscious that he was conscious of the crown With which her love had crowned him in that look Which dimmed with pride and glad- ness. Then he took Her hand, and said, “One day, when I have done Good work, Paul, work which you can look upon And say, This true man truly played his part— You’ll give me this soft hand ; I have her heart I think, already ; even as she has mine,— Worth little, but hers to take or to decline.”
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HILDA AMONG THE BROKEN GODS

PROLOGUE

It is a Church of the Ages, all
Arched and pillared and grandly
towered,
With many a niche on the buttressed
wall,
And delicate tracery, scrolled and
flowered :
Gargoyles gape, and arches fly
From base to base of the pinnacles
high,
And the great cross points to the
solemn sky.

A stately Church, and a Church all
through,
Everywhere shaped by a thought
divine,
With symbols of Him who is Just
and True,
And emblems of Him who is Bread
and Wine ;
It is dowered with wealth of land
and gold,
And memories high of the days of old,
And of sheep that were lost, gathered
into its fold.

Lord bishops sleep their slumber deep
Under mitre and crosier carved in
stone ;
There are brasses quaint for the
warrior saint
Who had battled at Acre and Ascalon ;

In the low-groined crypts lie dukes
and earls,
Resting now from their plots and
quarrels,
But they mix not their dust with the
rustic carles.

It is not day, and it is not dark,
And the altar-lights are burning dim ;
One sings, but it is not priest nor clerk,
And he chaunts no psalm, and he sings
no hymn.
Who are these that are trooping in,
With grimy visage, and bearded chin,
Rude and unmannered, with noisy din ?

Some one is wailing—a poor soul ailing
Down in the dim aisles far away ;
Who is that droning ? is he intoning
The great Athanasian creed to-day ?
Silence that chatter and laughter there,
And do not stand bonneted up to
stare—
Hush ! that is surely the voice of
prayer.

FIRST VOICE

They have made Thy Temple a place
abhorred,
They have mocked Thy Christ, for
His own betrayed Him ;
And now they have taken away
my Lord,
Ah woe ! and I know not where they
have laid Him.

SECOND VOICE

Now that the gods are certainly dead—
 Brahma and Zeus and the Father,
 and all—
 With a desk and a lime-light overhead,
 We might use this up for a lecture-hall.
 We could show them things on the
 altar there—
 Bringing the light to the proper focus—
 Wonderful transformations rare,
 Would beat the priests with their
 hocus-pocus :
 With two or three chemicals we could
 make
 Nature her miracle-power surrender,
 And a glass, at the angle fit, would
 wake
 As gruesome a ghost as the witch
 of Endor.
 Everything here would give point to
 my hits
 At the monk's huge faith, and his
 little wits,
 As I drive at Bigots, and shout for
 Truth,
 And laugh at the dreams of the world's
 raw youth.

THIRD VOICE

A pest on all the reforming crew,
Savant or Puritan, old or new !
 See how the rogues come tramping in,
 Now that they have not to praise
 or pray—
 Faugh ! what a breath of tobacco
 and gin !
 They crowd to church because God
 is away !
 And they've smashed that pitying
 angel's face,
 That touched one's heart with a tender
 grace,
 None of their brute-wits could ever
 replace.

10

If there be angels good or bad,
 I very much doubt, and I do not
 much care ;
 But yet what a pitying look it had,
 Beaming down from the oriel there !
 Will no one silence that idiot's chatter
 About laws, forsooth, of health and
 riches ?
 I'd rather the old priest's *Stabat*
Mater—
 If we had but the ordeal now for
 witches,
 Wouldn't I souse him into the water !

FOURTH VOICE

Anathema Maranatha ! Hark !
 Be he sinner or be he saint,
 There is no place in the saving Ark
 For one who keeps but a cobweb faint
 Of doubt in his heart, or doubt in
 his head,
 About any one article I have read.
 "Credo," that is the key of heaven ;
 The more incredible, so much more
 Virtue lies in the Credo, given
 To open the everlasting door.
 Thurifer, let the censer wave :
 "Hoc est corpus," lift it high ;
 Christ is risen from the stone-sealed
 grave ;
 Now let us forth with him, and die
 Into the life that comes thereby.
 In high procession the priests will go
 Chaunting the *Dies Irae* low,
Dies illa, sad and slow.
 So the Church in the days of old,
 Robed in linen and purple and gold,
 Foiled the devil, and all his tricks,
 And drove out the swine with a
 crucifix.

FIRST VOICE (*far away*)

"They have taken away my Lord,
 And I know not where they have laid
 him ! "

So it went wailing down the long
aisle,
Mixed with the hum of the priest and
the people;
And a shudder passed through the
massive pile,
From the low-groined crypt to the
cross on the steeple:
And the glimmering lights on the
altar died,
No more the priest-hymn sobbed and
sighed,
But a hollow wind wailed through the
transept wide.

BOOK FIRST

CLAUD MAXWELL, POET

I do not blame thee, Hilda; did not
blame thee even then
When all my life fell dark, and all my
way was hard to see;
And when I drifted, aimless, among
clear-purposed men,
Though often wroth at myself, I could
never be wroth with thee.

Where art thou, where, my darling?
for thou art my darling still,
So gladsome and so winsome, and in
beauty so complete!
The old home is as you left it, waiting
for my Love to fill
Her corner by the fireside, or the
sunny window seat.

But nevermore thou comest, though
evermore I go
Where thoughts of thee shall meet me
as a sure-returning pain;
I cannot keep from that which only
keeps alive my woe,
And I would not keep from it until
thou comest back again.

Lonely now the old familiar walks
beside the brattling brooks,
And lone with awful silence are the
evening hours I sit;
I think I should go mad, but for the
trick of writing books,
Though I care but for the writing, not
for that which I have writ.

Dead is all the old ambition; dead the
heart to lettered fame,
Though the humour have its pranks
yet, and the fancy will have play;
I heed not for the Public praise, nor
for the Critic's blame,
Nor for the larger shadow that I cast
upon my way.

Oh, my rose was only budding when I
laid it on my breast,
And I watched the leaves unfolding,
and the tender blushes flit;
Now my rose is broke and withered—
and I broke it whom it blest—
Yet the fragrance haunts my life still,
and is all that sweetens it.

No, I do not blame you, Hilda; we
were both of us so young,
And I had a peremptory way, un-
gracious, unbeseeching,
And a petulant hot humour, and an
often silent tongue
Which you thought betokened anger
when my mind was only dreaming.

But I had no right to dream when I
was called to play the man,
And to cherish, with fond love, the
love that put its trust in me:
Better lose the wayward Artist in the
drudging Artisan
Than take the yoke of love, and live
as free among the free.

And oh, how could I mar, with one
unsettling doubt, the Faith
Which consecrated all the homely
duty of her days,
And winged quick seeds of hope
beyond the bounding wall of death
To make a life Eternal, full of peace
and full of praise ?

Who would take from any weary head
the pillow of its rest,
Smoothed by a mother's hand, and
leave it so to ache and throb ?
Or break beneath the unfledged soul
the shaped and sheltering nest,
And bid it on the bare bough sing,
when it can only sob ?

But we wake in the young morning
when the light is breaking forth,
And look out on its misty gleams, as
if the noon were full ;
And the Infinite, around, seems but a
larger kind of earth
Ensphering this, and measured by the
self-same handy rule.

And doubtful shadows come and go,
and we, of nothing sure,
Have yet no qualms in trifling with a
tranquil faith and true !
Ay me ! it was her quiet faith that
made her heart so pure,
Yet I troubled its calm waters with
the wanton stones I threw.

But oh, I loved you, Hilda, and will
love you evermore ;
I cannot choose but love you, be the
anguish what it will,
For the very pain of loving is all other
joys before :
Though you broke my heart in pieces,
every bit would love you still.

Though you broke my heart in pieces,
I would love you more than all
Who might seek to bind it up again ;
for love alone can bind
What only love can break ; and all
the fragments broken small
Would but glass as many Hildas in
the mirror of my mind.

What memories gather round me,
sitting by the lonely hearth !
They will not leave the house, those
flitting ghosts of other days ;—
Here a whispering, there a rustling, or
an echo of old mirth,
Or a face out of the darkness with a
sad, rebuking gaze.

Ah me, but to remember how I placed
you with your back
Against the old wych-elm tree in the
golden summer tide,
As we went, with slate and satchel,
down the dim, green Lovers' Walk,
And half in fear, and half in jest, you
vowed to be my bride !

But with me it was right earnest ; I
exulted from that day
That mine thou wert, and mine alone,
and ever must be mine ;
And I played protector grandly if our
schoolmates in their play
Did but touch thy finger roughly, or
lift their eyes to thine.

Oh, had we ne'er as children played
together in the street,
Never waded in the burns, nor plaited
rushes on the lea,
Never busked us with the bluebells,
never chanced on earth to meet,
Till we looked upon each other when
our Love had eyes to see !

For cousinship will hardly grow to
perfect wedded love;
There lacks the charm of wonder, and
the mystery of fear;
It fits too easy on us, like a worn,
familiar glove,
And we tend it not so nicely, though
we hold it all as dear.

I cannot but remember—we were still
but girl and boy—
That night we went to buy the ring,
how fain we were to linger,
Half-afraid and half-ashamed to ask
about the mystic toy,
And how they all slipped loosely up
and down the taper-finger.

Then our cottage, and the garden with
the sea-pink borders! Now,
I bethink me, we came to it ere the
apple-blossom fell,
And the bloom was on our love as the
bloom was on the bough,
And there was singing in the trees,
and in our hearts as well—

Singing of our happy fancies, singing
of our joyous hopes!
All our life was filled with singing, as
the skylark fills the sky:
Oh the music of that gladness, in our
hearts and in the copse,
Swelling with a tender sweetness, and
the peace that came thereby!

Then, the lengthening summer
twilights, as we looked down on
the river
Gleaming silvery in the shallows,
gloomingly darkly in the pools!
And the silent, sleepy village, with its
blue smoke curling ever—
Welcome sight to weary labour plod-
ding homeward with its tools!

And the tall green cones of poplar
that around the kirkyard stood,
And the gilded weather-cock that
flashed the sunlight from the spire,
And the red glow on the window
panes; and then the quiet mood
That came on with the stars, and
drew us closer to the fire!

I would not but remember those
welcome, winsome hours
That crowned the day's fit labour
with fit recompense of rest,
And how we watched the laden bees
amid the honeyed flowers:
Yet I hardly seemed at home in life,
but somehow like a guest.

There was a feeling haunted me, that
all might be untrue—
An unreal, phantom idyl—an illusion
of the brain;
It did not look like fact, but like a
dream that only knew
The lawlessness of Fancy, and had
banished grief and pain.

So passed in tender bliss the weeks
and months of love and peace,
And I wondered when I should awake,
and find the dream was gone;
So passed the year and day, and still
the wonder did not cease,
Although there came a frustrate hope
that left us still alone.

So passed the time in services of love
and patient duty,
And there was no cloud of trouble,
and no fret of wearing strife;
And still its memories cling to me,
and clothe with dreams of beauty,
As with ivy green and wallflower, the
dim ruin of my life.

For it is a dim, grey ruin where no
cheerful work is done,
Nor sound of gladness heard, but only
moaning of the wind,
And lonely desolation sits aweary of
the sun,
With little caring for myself, and little
for my kind.

I know that that is wrong ; that it is
weak to yield to it ;
That manhood has its duty even when
life is cold and grey—
Duty never half so noble, nor so
strengthening and fit,
As when the clouds have gathered
thick, and darkened all the day.

I plead not for myself ; I know that I
am weak and poor,
A creature of the sunshine, and my
sunshine was so brief :
I have no heart to struggle now ; I
only can endure,
And let the tide sweep on, as I sit
clinging to my grief.

What was it, first, that broke the spell,
and showed that we were twain—
United, and yet sundered by a strain
of character ?
A trifle, yet it smote me with a dis-
appointing pain
Sharper than a grief more real, for it
marred my thought of her.

I had a fond ambition, and she did not
share in it ;
I thought to make her famous, and
she did not care for fame ;
And I often sat a-dreaming, and
watched the moonbeams flit
With the river flickering through
them, and its ripple all aflame.

Bit from days of early childhood with
the love of rhythmic song,
I had yet a curious shame for that
which was my secret pride,
And would hide my work in midnight,
as if doing something wrong,
Though I hoped the world would yet
admire the thing I strove to hide.

How I covered reams of paper ! how
I treasured every scrap !
I might outgrow the fancy, yet was
loath to let it go :
How I watched the moods of Nature,
as I lay upon her lap,
And she spoke to me by flowers and
birds, and streams that murmured
low !

The winter and the summer and the
morning and the night,
All seasons and all creatures brought
her messages to me ;
I loved the very newt that crawled
among the lilies bright,
And the tiger-branded wasp, and the
drowsy yellow bee.

And the silence of the mountains spoke
unutterable things ;
And the sounding of the ocean was as
silence in my soul ;
And close to me, and conscious, lying
warm as brooding wings,
Lay the Mystery of mysteries that
quickeneth the whole.

I was glancing only lately at those stiff
and futile rhymes,
Where half-formed thought was strug-
gling for the forms of perfect Art,
And thinking how I treasured them,
and read them many times ;
And even then to burn them, somehow
went against my heart.

Poor stuff they are enow—a drift of
dry and shrivelled weed,
Marking where once the tide of froth
and flying scud had been ;
Yet will I keep this fragment, for
scrawled on it I read,
“My husband’s nicest verses, though I
scarce know what they mean” :—

CONTRASTS

Twain are they, sundered each from
each,
Though oft together they are brought ;
Discoursing in a common speech,
Yet having scarce a common thought ;
The same sun warmed them all their
days,
They breathe one air of life serene ;
Yet, moving on their several ways,
They walk with a whole world
between.

I think they never meet without
Some sharp encounter of their wits ;
And neither hints a faith or doubt,
The other does not take to bits ;
For what the one regards with awe,
The other holds a creed outworn ;
And what this boasts as perfect law,
That turns to laughter with his scorn.

No envious grudge is in their hearts,
Detracting from the honour due
To nobler worth, or greater parts,
Or larger grasp, or clearer view :
Simply there is a gulf between
Their ways of life, and modes of
thought,
And nothing is by either seen
But as the other likes it not.

With vision keen and thought complete
Cool-headed Warham holds his way,
And all that lies about his feet
He makes it his, and clear as day ;

All common things of natural birth
He sets forth in a novel sense ;
But never leaves the common earth
To seek the dim Omnipotence.

He gathers knowledge hour by hour,
Forgetting nought that once he knew,
And handling it with conscious power
As matter certified and true ;
And all he knows gives added might
That still with harder thought com-
bines ;

We wonder at the shining light,
He wonders less the more it shines !

He has slight pity for our pain,
For weakness, he has none at all ;
He is not proud, he is not vain ;
He is not either great or small ;
But he is strong and hard and clear
As is a frosty winter day,
And never sheds an idle tear,
Nor flings an idle word away.

He cannot breathe but in the breath
Of certainty and knowledge clear ;
And where we have to walk by Faith
He will not go ; or will not fear
To search into the mysteries,
And bid the haunting shadows go ;
And yet, with all he knows and sees,
True wisdom somehow does not grow.

But Cromer is of finer make,
And doth with subtler thoughts com-
mune—

Thoughts singing oft in dim daybreak,
And silent oft in blaze of noon ;
He sees the process Warham saw,
But to the Power he is not blind,
Beholds the working of the Law,
And bows to that which lies behind.

Seeking what knife can ne’er dissect,
Nor flame-wrapt blowpipe can set free,
Nor chemic test can e’er detect,
But only kindred mind can see,

He finds in everything a light
Which, shunning finest power of sense,
Does more to make a man of might
Than knowledge of the Why or
Whence.

And much he knows, and much he
thinks,
But he *is* more than all he knows;
For still aspiring, still he drinks
Fresh inspiration as he goes,
More careful that the man should grow
Than that the mind should understand:
He loves all creatures here below,
And touches all with tender hand.

He pities all the pained and weak,
And feels for their unhappy fate;
Simple and true and brave and meek,
He does not know that he is great;
He looks to heaven with wondering
gaze,
And earth with awe by him is trod;
We marvel at the words he says,
He, at the silences of God.

Thus on their several ways they go,
And neither other comprehends,
Yet it was God that made them so,
And they do serve His several ends;
That seeks for light to walk in it,
And *this* for God to live in Him;
One questions with a searching wit,
The other trusts where all is dim.

Why quarrel with their several parts,
Where each is good if one is best?
And who shall say that this departs,
Restful, unto Eternal rest,
While he who loves the light goes
down
Into the darkness of the night?—
Life grows unto its perfect crown,
And light unto a larger light.

I often spoke to Hilda of the poetry
that lay
In all the rich and wondrous life that
compassed us about,
At the firesides of the people, in the
wild-flowers by the way,
In our trials, and our sorrows, in our
Faith too, and our doubt.

But she did not care for verses; thought
all poets must be poor;
And would rather some more money
than be sung about in rhyme:
Yet she kissed my cheek and fore-
head, and vowed that she was sure
I should write a name immortal 'mong
the great ones of the time.

Oh, she knew that she was stupid; how
I ever came to wed
Such a silly girl as she was, she never
could make out;
But she could not keep the garden, if
I would have every bed
Free for birds and beasts and creatures
to write poetry about.

It was nice to hear the throstles
answering on the evening breeze,
And to watch the short, sharp rushes
of the blackbird on the lawn;
But there would not be a cherry left
upon the loaded trees,
And the pease were black with cawing
rooks about the early dawn.

A shadow fell on me at this; for love,
young love, had thrown
A glamour all about her, wreathed a
glory round her face,
Sought in her high inspiration; and
one does not like to own
That his dream is somewhat faded,
and a little commonplace.

Vexed, and slightly disappointed!—
 still our love was fond and true,
 And trustful and sufficing; so it did
 not matter much;
 But I sat the more alone, and hid my
 labour from her view,
 For I felt the poet's shrinking from
 unsympathetic touch.

And my speech grew shallow to her,
 and my feeling oft was spent
 In small enforced humour to laugh
 poetry away;
 And crackling jests would flicker round
 the higher sentiment,
 Turning pathos into laughter, and
 earnest into play.

Of course, it was not good for me;
 but I could shelter her,
 Belying my own nature; and I
 scrupled not at that,
 If I might but dream in secret when
 the owlets were astir,
 And hooted from the ivy to the moon-
 bewildered bat.

And just on this point only there was
 silence 'twixt us twain;
 But silence bringeth sorrow where the
 trust should be complete;
 Love likes not shallow mirth, too;
 and a fear sprang up amain,
 That in the deeper life of life we yet
 might fail to meet.

Not that spinning rhymes and verses is
 the deeper life of life,
 Though it may be a true fashion which
 that deeper life shall wear;
 But if heart must mate with heart to
 make the husband and the wife,
 Mind should also match with mind to
 make the perfect wedded pair.

Not so with me and Hilda; there was
 love, and nothing more:
 But some ballads I had written, brought
 me praise and also pay;
 Then she changed her mind about
 them, as she tinkled o'er and o'er
 The little store of guineas that had
 dropt upon her way.

Surely welcome were the guineas;
 but I had not writ for gold,
 And the gold was all she cared for,
 and I could have cursed the thing;
 But she had the care of housekeeping,
 and troubles manifold,
 That were bound upon her spirit by
 the slender marriage-ring.

I should have thought of that, for it
 was burdening her youth—
 Her youth that never knew a care
 until she came to me;
 But I only saw that everything went
 orderly and smooth,
 And wist not of the frets and fears of
 small economy.

Then, the handling of those guineas
 seemed to turn her little head;
 She was sure that I could write a score
 of better songs a week,
 And she need not vex her heart about
 the milk-books, or the bread,
 Or the men that came with nasty bills,
 and looked so sharp and sleek.

And she wanted something pretty—a
 bit of ornament,
 A dress, or some fresh furnishing to
 brighten up a room;
 And we named them quaintly after,
 each, its poem, as we spent
 The little roll of gold that made her
 life to bud and bloom.

"Noche Triste," was a ballad of the
fall of Mexico,
And also a chintz curtain in our little
parlour hung;
And a band of scarlet ribbon, knotted
up into a bow,
Had its name of "English Harold"
from a song that I had sung.

Trifles! yet they lit our home with
lamps of sweet significance,
Made every chamber live, and put a
soul in chairs and stools,
That linked them with our highest, as
the moonbeams where they glance
Silver with heavenly beauty even the
common water-pools.

Trifles! little homely trifles; fireside
jesters that lose their way
Out of doors; yet what a pathos in
their memory may dwell!
For I thought my heart would break
when I came but yesterday
On that rag of scarlet ribbon fastening
up the jargonelle.

Twice-paid I deemed my verses when
the trifle they had brought
Brightened her evening muslin then,
and made her face to shine;
And now it all came back to point the
misery of our lot,
As with a twice-told sorrow, in that
ribbon's fate and mine.

Hilda scarcely read my verses, never
sang a song of mine,
Though her voice was like a plaintive
bird's, and thrilled you through and
through;
I have wept to hear her evening hymn,
or Psalm with crabbed line,
Ring through the open casement as the
stars lit up the blue.

But she scarcely read my verses; even
some that I had writ
Of our wooing and our wedding, gave
her but a passing thought;
I was pleased to see her pleased, but
still there was a sting in it,
When she prized my labour only for
the thing that it had bought.

Yet I would not be disheartened; my
purpose only rose
The higher, and my fancies were but
cherished more and more;
I would seek out fresher fountains
whose living water flows,
Unnoticed, in a land where song had
rarely been before.

I would sing the life I saw—the world
that lay about our door;
Its passion and its longing, its error
and its sin:
It was fresh, if rather sunless, and it
deepened more and more
As I tilled the field whose harvest I
was fain to gather in.

Thus, long and late I brooded, well
resolved to make my mark
On the great age we live in, and my
silence deeper grew;
I went musing in the day-time, and
sat mooning in the dark,
And the rush of sudden fancies made
my slumbers broken too.

For the vision grew upon me, the
more I did attain,
Dwarfing still my poor achievement
with some glimpse of nobler fruit;
I scarce had caught a measure when
some diviner strain,
A-singing sweetly in my heart, would
sing the other mute.

Those were days of rich invention,
 like fresh goldfields, when they find
 Nuggets studding the first spadeful,
 grains that yellow all the sand ;
 One has by and by to crush the quartz
 —to grind the barren mind,
 And pick a little precious thought
 with weary heart and hand.

But those were fruitful times, when
 thought ran faster than the pen,
 And moulds of quaint invention shaped
 a hundred dainty strains,
 As I touched with playful fancy the
 odd characters of men,
 With kindly humours in their hearts,
 or maggots in their brains.

If I have won a little niche—I know
 it is but small—
 In Fame's proud temple, it was then I
 won it, being true,
 And sparing not myself, and without
 effort natural,
 And singing ever from my heart, and
 only what I knew.

For mine eye was opened wide to all
 the glory and the beauty,
 And also to the error, and the failure,
 and the strife ;
 My heart had tasted sorrow, as it clung
 to love and duty.
 And I felt my art was deepened with
 the deepening of my life.

I sought about among the common facts
 of common day,—
 What chanced me in a corner, or what
 met me in a crowd,—
 For the undertones of pathos murmur-
 ing softly by the way,
 Or quaint, droll humours, mirthful with
 a laughter never loud.

I cared not for the converse of Respect-
 ability,
 Choosing rather the blank Innocent
 that sauntered down the street,
 Singing the broken fragment of some
 weird old melody,
 As he drifted, to and fro, with vagrant
 thought and aimless feet.

All the smug and well-conditioned,
 growing rich and growing stout,
 And the men that fussed and wrangled
 about the Kirk and State,
 And genteel, superior people, dressing
 well and dining out,
 I found them very dull, though their
 content was very great.

I stored up thoughts and pictures ; for
 I knew that Art is long,
 That you cannot rear a temple like a
 hut of sticks and turf ;
 But I did not think what perils on a
 woman's life may throng,
 Sitting lonely with her thoughts that
 chafe and murmur like the surf.

Ever more and more absorbed, I
 hardly noted as they came
 The changing moods, the chills, the
 frets that daily did increase ;
 I would dig the deep foundations of
 a long-abiding Fame,
 And wist not that they undermined
 my home of love and peace.

Ah me ! that hungry passion ! and it
 looked so innocent !
 A minister of love, belike, to brighten
 all our day,
 To gild the petty care of life, and
 homely incident,
 As we sat like summer birds, and sang
 our troubles all away !

And yet it was self-seeking, let me
 paint it as I will,
 But the poet's eager craving for the
 vanity of Fame,
 But the witchery of Art enchanted
 with its own sweet skill,
 Seeking less to better life, than just
 to make itself a name.

And perchance she saw its shallowness
 as I did by and by,
 And was truer to the fact, in all her
 seeming commonplace,
 And the simple, homely method of her
 quiet life, than I
 With my thoughts away in dreamland,
 and its haze about my face.

For I have not won the glory which
 I lost my peace to gain ;
 The critic world has praised me in a
 kindly sort of way,
 But I have not struck a chord that
 thrilled the common heart of men,
 Nor blazed forth as a star upon the
 forefront of the day.

And yet the passion hankers in me,
 not to be gainsaid,
 In spite of all misgiving, and the verdict
 of the crowd,
 And I do not care for poverty, neglect,
 or little bread,
 If I may but spin my verses, though I
 only spin my shroud.

That was the first night-frost that
 blanched our young life's tender
 bloom :

Not much ; and we had love enough
 to throw it off, had I
 But taken thought of the pale face that
 in the silent room
 Turned ever to the kirkyard with a
 tear-dimmed, weary eye :

Turned ever to the kirkyard where
 the little grave was green
 That buried her young hope, and made
 her motherhood a wail,
 Silent and yet unceasing, for the bliss
 that might have been,
 But now was lying in a shroud, and
 nailed with coffin-nail.

I did take thought a little then ; and
 brought an old school friend
 To cheer her in her sorrow—but the
 girl was hard as steel,
 Who tried, I fear, to mar the peace I
 hoped that she would mend,
 And blended coldest sceptic thought
 with strangely burning zeal :

A girl so unlike Hilda that I wot not
 how they drew
 Together for a moment—sharp-witted,
 and without
 An atmosphere around her mind ; but
 many things she knew,
 And had not any light of faith, nor
 any shade of doubt.

Of course we did not know it ; but
 it was unlucky fate
 That brought into my life then such
 a thread of unbelief,
 Confirming troubled fancies that had
 come to me of late,
 And brooded o'er my life with dim
 foreboding of new grief.

For pondering, as I could, the things
 around me, I began
 To piece them bit by bit into some
 pattern of clear thought ;
 And lo ! they grew too fast to fit
 into my little plan,
 And squared not with the hard and
 narrow faith that I had got.

I had worn my baby-creed, just, as a
 thing of course, till now,
 Unthinking if it fitted on the grown
 man as the child;
 My mother made it for me when the
 yet unshadowed brow
 Was crowned with sunny curls, and
 the young soul was undefiled.

But it was a thing apart from me,
 and compassed round with dread;
 Unquestioned and unsearched, it lay
 bathed in an awful light,
 Sacred as writ which had been sealed
 by the beloved dead,
 And beautiful with memories of piety
 and right.

But now my mind was darkened o'er
 with dim, disturbing doubt,
 And many roots of faith appeared to
 strike no further down
 Than customary thoughts that I had
 never reasoned out,
 Nor felt their pressure on my soul to
 own them, or disown.

Could any juggling art transfer the
 sin that I had done,
 Unto another soul, and give his inno-
 cence to me?
 Could any claim of other's right be
 mine to stand upon,
 And urge His sinless sorrow as my
 justifying plea?

And could I think the world lay all
 beneath the wrath of God,
 Seeing it folded in His light, and
 kept with tender care?
 Or that the Father's love could grasp
 an everlasting rod,
 Nor falter as it hearkened to the wail
 of dim despair?

Could every heart be wholly wicked,
 every soul untrue,
 As if it were a spark from hell that
 kindled all desire?
 Could all be set to rights again when
 God had gleaned a few,
 While the harvest of the nations was
 faggoted for fire?

At first I feared the venturous thought,
 and laid it quick aside;
 But still it would return, although in
 other form it came.—
 Is He not ever merciful who loved
 us all, and died,
 Gracious to-day and yesterday, and
 evermore the same?

Trembling, I fluttered to and fro,
 like moth about the flame,
 Now saying, "It is light, and I
 must come unto the light":
 Then pausing, for the moth unto a
 swift destruction came,
 When, curious for the light, it left
 the dim and dusky night.

I think it did not grow to be strong-
 hearted faith in me;
 I only dared to doubt, and then
 made pictures of my doubt;
This way the better reason drew that
 I might clearly see;
That way old custom dragged, and
 bade me cast the reason out.

So wave on wave arose, and burst,
 and eddied back again,
 But still the tide swelled higher till
 it covered all the beach;
 I saw old landmarks vanish, yet that
 smote me not with pain,
 Nor leaped my heart with gladness
 at the truth it hoped to reach.

I longed for light ; but all the light
I found was second-hand ;
Reflected thought that had been
tossed about, for ages past,
From surface-minds that vainly claimed
alone to understand
The mystery of the Light that is
like shadow on us cast.

They say that doubt is weak ; but
yet, if life be in the doubt,
The living doubt is more than Faith
that life did never know ;
Pulp and jelly of the shell-fish, clasped
in bony mail without,
Crack the joinings and the sutures
that the life within may grow.

Could I have just believed with all
my heart and soul and mind !
But faith was slowly breaking up, and
parting like a cloud,
And yet the light that through the
rifts was glancing from behind,
Looked sickly in the wavering mist
that wrapped it like a shroud.

A zone of large indifference, then, I
made, where easy hope
Linked faith and unfaith, arm in arm,
and sung along the road ;
All would somehow yet come right—
at least, I did not mean to mope,
If I could not feel the lightness, yet
I would not feel the load.

God was larger than the creeds : they
were the cunning compromise
For unanimous decision of the many
and the few ;
Rafts that leaked at every log, so
loose the binding of their ties :
But they floated, and the thoughtless
held that therefore they were true.

This was the one decree, that God
should yet be all in all,
And in the Christ would reconcile all
things in earth and heaven,
And a new Paradise arise more
glorious from the Fall,
And bread of life be sweeter, raised
from sin's disturbing leaven.

By and by, I hinted lightly at this
dawning hope of mine
To Hilda, in a quaint conceit of
ballad rudely rhymed :
It put her friend in raptures, and she
vowed it most divine,
But it seemed a sorry jest to her, and
wicked and ill-timed.

Well ; it was a foolish trifle, burnt
well-nigh as soon as writ,
A dream of death, and how all life
shall come to fulness then,
And how the love that sweetens
earth, and mirth that brightens it
Could never darken Heaven, for God
had given them unto men.

Was it strange, when Hilda frowned,
that I should turn me to her friend,
Who clapped her hands, ecstatic, and
would have me read again ?
Perhaps she overdid it ; and it turned
out in the end
That she was false and faithless—but
I did not know her then.

Maybe, I should have seen that there
was nothing in my rhyme
To lift up eyes of worship, softly
swimming in a tear,
Or to part the eager lips with breath-
less rapture, all the time,
As the humour of the dreamer dropt
upon the listening ear.

No doubt, she overdid it, turning up
her thin, brown face
With the dark eyes and eager ; I had
called her Caberfae,
She looked so like a startled deer
that, in a lonely place,
Lifts her head among the bracken at
the dawning of the day.

And somehow, after that, she filled
my life up, as the tide
Creeps, beneath the waving tangles,
up the sloping, shingly shore,
And along the quiet sands, and softly
lapping at your side,
Girds about you ere you wot, and is
behind you and before.

She would look through books of
reference, and mark the places right,
And copy papers nicely, and be useful
fifty ways ;
And sometimes on the darkling
thought would glance a piercing
light,
Or with woman's nice suggestion
touch a sentiment or phrase.

I looked to her for sympathy, I leant
on her for aid ;
Fanatical for Reason, still she loved
the poet's Art,
Or vowed she loved it dearly ; and
how cleverly she played,
With artillery of praise upon the out-
works of the heart !

Ere long, I did not care to hear her
raptures for they came
To be mere ejaculations, monotonous,
without
Any critical discernment ; and I felt
a growing shame
At the lauds which she kept singing,
and the things they were about.

And, besides, my floating doubts,
which were like mists that slowly
trail

O'er the mountains, adding mystery
and grandeur to their shapes,
Were in her a chilling drizzle, or a
driving sleet and hail,
Hiding sun and moon and stars, and
all the shining seas and capes.

I could not cast her off, but yet I
heeded not how soon
She took herself away now, with that
bitter sneer of hers ;
She was as coldly chaste as are "the
glimpses of the moon,"
But she laughed at all the faiths of
men, and all their characters.

And I saw that Hilda pined away—
she did not fret nor frown,
But whatever our discourse, she let
a pallid silence linger
On her lips from hour to hour,
while moving slowly up and down,
From knuckle to the point, the
marriage-ring upon her finger.

For Hilda had a faith serene, clear
as the evening star,
Keen-piercing through the changeful
glow with its unchanging gleam,
Wheeling in some calm zone where
neither doubts nor tremors are,
Nor shadowy, dim misgivings, that
perchance we only dream.

And now she was amazed because
old Faiths broke up in me,
With little feeling of a loss, or hope
of higher gain,
With little sense of sorrow or regret
or poverty,
But she beheld the change with fear
and shivering and pain.

BOOK SECOND

HILDA, SAINT-WIFE

HILDA'S DIARY

March, 18—

WINIFRED URQUHART and I, when we were tall school-girls, Chatting of wooings and weddings while twisting our hair up in curls, Or whispering some hush-secret, which was not secret a bit, Only we were confidential, and made a secret of it—

Winnie and I made a paction, silly things that we were !

That she would be sure to tell me, and I must be sure to tell her,

Whoever, first of us, wedded, all the bitter and sweet

Of the life of marriage that makes the life of a woman complete ;

The hope, the fear, and the bliss too, we were to set down all,

And none of our Gardens of Eden be hid by a hedge or a wall.

So now she writes me a letter, all underlined, to say

She trusts that I do not forget the promise I made that day ;

Hints that, perhaps, I might keep a Diary locked with a key,

And sacred To Early Friendship, which no other eye should see ;

And hopes that I will not act like commonplace wives, who drop

Their friends and their French and pianos, and put to the Past a full stop,

So to begin a new paragraph all about beeves and muttons,

Darning, and troubles with servants, and gentlemen's shirts and buttons.

Why does marriage, she adds, so often a woman degrade ?

Why is the wife so silly, who was ever so bright as a maid ?

Why should a husband like to fallow her intellect,

And starve it on housekeeping cares that lower her self-respect ?

But she is sure that mine is all that he ought to be,

Worthy of love and devotion, almost worthy of me.

Yet oh, the young love of girls ! it is purer, truer, and better !

And so she concludes with a prayer for a long and an early letter.

This has set me a-thinking that, maybe, I ought to write

The things that my heart is full of, as the noon of heaven with light,

The thoughts that I had not before, which gave me a larger life,

And the bliss that never I knew till he called me his own little wife.

Not that I mean to keep a silly promise like that—

Winnie is clever and scheming ; I know what she wants to be at.

Give her a word, good or bad, and she'd spin such a web from the hint,

And colour a meaningless phrase with so suspicious a tint,

That folk would begin to whisper, sure there was something amiss :

And then she would write me, bewailing the world and its wickedness.

Dearly she loves a mystery, dearly she loves to be thought

To know what she ought not to know, and to wit what none else ever wot :

For Winnie is clever and scheming, even when she looks like a fool ;

She was not liked by the girls, and she was not happy at school,

But I came to be fond of her, rather,
 by having to take her part,
 When others were hard upon her, and
 said that she had not a heart ;
 Which is not true, I am sure, nor yet
 the tales that they told
 Of wicked books she had read before
 she was twelve years old.
 I have heard that, since she came home,
 she cultivates science, and writes,
 And lectures over the country, most of
 the winter nights,
 Having her hair cut short, and her
 finger-tips black with ink :—
 But Winnie could never forget what
 is due to a lady, I think.
 I am going to write in my book, but
 not for her eyes to see :
 Ought I to hide it from him who keeps
 not a thought from me ?
 Oh, there is something in marriage, like
 the veil of the temple of old,
 That screened the Holy of Holies with
 blue and purple and gold ;
 Something that makes a chamber where
 none but the one may come,
 A sacredness too, and a silence, where
 joy that is deepest is dumb.
 And it is in that secret chamber where
 chiefly my days are passed,
 With a sense of something holy, and a
 shadow of something vast,
 Till he comes, who alone is free to
 come and to go as he will,
 Till he comes, and the brooding silence
 begins to pulse and thrill.
 Oh come, for my heart is weary,
 waiting, my love, for thee !
 I will lock my bliss from the world,
 but my love shall have ever the key.

March, 18—

When I remember the way we girls
 were wont to talk
 Up in our rooms at night, or out on
 the daily walk,

It seems like an unreal echo, ever so
 far away
 From the clear realm of nature, and
 light of the sun and the day.
 Yet it sounded to us, at the time, like
 absolute reason and good,
 As we chattered of woman's rights,
 and babbled in wrathful mood
 Of Maries, thoughtful and wise, that
 often were met at school,
 Changed into careful Marthas under a
 husband's rule,
 Heedless of mental culture, losing
 their nimble wits,
 To be housemaids dusting the rooms,
 or cookmaids turning the spits.
 Winnie was great on that—I thought
 she was eloquent even,
 As the small face kindled up with a
 light, as it were, from heaven,
 Vowing the wife became a traitor to
 woman in this,
 Betraying a noble cause for a petting
 word or a kiss ;
 Wronging her husband, too, by giving
 a lower aim
 Of self-indulgence to life, which
 he knew not at home till she
 came.
 What greater wrong could she do him
 than teach him only to care
 For dainties, and kickshaws, and slip-
 pers, and naps in the easy chair ?—
 But Nature is more than Logic, and
 wedlock is more than we
 Dreamed of then in our folly ;
 and great is the change now in
 me :
 Motherhood, if it should come, will
 work more wonders still,
 For love it is all in all, and it does
 whatsoever it will ;
 Dusting, darning, drudging, nothing is
 great or small,
 Nothing is mean or irksome, love will
 hallow it all ;

Sacrifice there is none if only I see
him glad,
And all my pleasure is gone if he be
heavy and sad.

April, 18—

Past is the honeymoon; and I think
it was not so good
As the home-coming together, in
quiet, thoughtful mood.

Then our life truly began: it was like
a dream before—

A dream in a boat, while the pale
moon glimmered from sea to shore,
And we went swaying about still under
the stars, and heard

Dreamily plashing billow, and dreamily
whispered word.

Why should we go a-jaunting when
the heart just wants to repose

From agitation of bliss, and to know
whereto it grows?

Nothing felt real to me then, or brought
me the feeling of rest,

As we sped hither and thither, like
birds flying far from the nest,

Hid in the bosk of the greenwood,
where they are longing to be,

And cosy and warm, and sweet with
the scent of the sheltering tree.

I did not like then to say it, because
all his plans had been laid

To visit some beautiful spot which
poets had famous made,

Or to look on some ancient Abbey
that sweetly went down to decay,

Wrapt in the ivy green, amid trees in
the lichen grey,

And all with me there beside him, he
said, to brighten the view,

And bathe it for him in a light which
for ever would make it new.

Therefore my voice was silent; but
oh, how I wearied to see

The house-fire which love was to
kindle, the home where my life was
to be!

For all the pert maids at the inns where
we hoped for a little to hide,
Scanning my bonnets and dresses, would
smirk at the new-made bride;

Scarcely a railway porter but knew my
trunks to be out

Fresh on a marriage trip, and led me,
blushing, about,

While Claud was looking so handsome
and self-possessed, like a king,

Proud and tender and ready, and
seeing to everything.

It is not nice to be stared at by everyone
that you meet,

As they smile and whisper together,
and scan you from head to feet.

I knew not the rest of love till we sat
in our little white room,

Close together, and watched the stars
coming out of the gloom,

In the hush of a raptured moment, his
strong arm clasping me round,

As on his bosom I leant to feel all the
peace I had found;

And he said, "We will fold our wings
now, for here I have made you a nest,

And lined it warm with the down of
the love that warms my breast."

Oh, he can say such things! And I
cannot say them to him;

I am quietest when I am gladdest; but
my heart was filled to the brim.

Just a moment before, and my trembling
would not cease,

But now the shiver was stilled in a
thrill of bliss and peace.

April, 18—

Our home is a bright little cottage,
half-smothered in yellow rose,

Not yet blooming, however; a still
river sullenly flows

Deep at the foot of a broomy brae, and
the leaping trout

Ripple its gloom in the evening as
gay flies flicker about.

Nor is it all so sullen, for down in a farther reach
 It leaps and sparkles and gleams o'er the stones of a pebbly beach,
 Under the birch and the hazel, just coming to leaf, and there are
 Blue-bell patches of sky, made bright with the primrose star.
 Behind is a group of great fir-trees, five of them, red-armed firs,—
 Druid sisters he calls them,—that moan when the night-wind stirs;
 Last of a great pine forest that stubs the heath with its roots
 For miles, till you come to a tarn where gulls and little round coots
 Are dipping and diving all day in a quiet solitude;
 There the bee haunts, and the air is blithe, and the lapwings brood.
 I hear the curlew scream, and the grouse-cock crowing at dawn,
 And yet when I stand at the door, where the cowslips laugh on the lawn—
 It is only a patch of green turf, enough to pasture a lark—
 I see the sleepy old town, and the spires of the Minster dark,
 And catch a glimpse of the sea-waves white on the yellow sand,
 Where the river leaps at the bar, and the coastguard houses stand.
 We have a bright little garden down on a sunny slope,
 Bordered with sea-pinks, and sweet with the songs and the blossoms of hope.
 Oh, it is all too good for me; often I catch myself singing
 In very lightness of heart, and I seem like the birds to be winging
 Merry from room to room, as they flutter from bush to tree,
 And each has her mate a-coming, as mine, too, is coming to me.

Am I wrong to be always so happy?
 This world is full of grief;
 Yet there is laughter of sunshine, to see the crisp green on the leaf,
 Daylight is ringing with song-birds, and brooklets are crooning by night;
 And why should I make a shadow where God makes all so bright?
 Earth may be wicked and weary, yet cannot I help being glad;
 There is sunshine without and within me, and how should I mope or be sad?
 God would not flood me with blessings, meaning me only to pine
 Amid all the bounties and beauties He pours upon me and mine;
 Therefore will I be grateful, and therefore will I rejoice;
 My heart is singing within me; sing on, O heart and voice.

May, 18—

Winnie has writ me again—she offers a visit in June;
 Some day she must come, I daresay; but that is an age too soon.
 What could I do with her? I should be like one reading a book,
 Lost in the story and passion, while she would be eager to look
 Over my shoulder to find out what was absorbing me so,
 And why, when my heart is so happy, the tears are so ready to flow;
 And now she would hurry, and now would tarry my turning the leaf;
 And I'd hate her in less than a week; and I know it would end in grief.
 Alone! I must be alone, to read my romance, for the plot
 Is only slowly unfolding; and oh, what a hero I've got!
 Noble and true and brave, all that a hero should be;
 So much better than I am; and great is his love to me;

Yet not greater than mine is, save that
 his mind is more,
 For oh I love him, I love, as a God I
 could almost adore.
 That makes me tremble at times, for
 oh if an idol I make,
 What if my idol were broken? Truly
 my heart it would break.
 What, if heaven should be wroth at
 me shrining and sainting a man
 Sinful and mortal as I? Yet God too
 I love, all I can;
 My heart is truer to Him the more I
 am loved and caressed;
 And surely He cannot be jealous of love
 He has bidden and blessed.

June, 18—

We have walks as the evenings
 lengthen; sometimes over the moor,
 Many-tinted and shadowed; brisk is
 the air there and pure
 Among the brown heath and the bracken
 that now from its snake-like bonds,
 Under the sun's deft fingers, is slowly
 uncoiling its fronds;
 Close-packed now, by and by they,
 overlapping, will hide
 The flower of the slender orchis
 purpling close by their side.
 Dry on the knolls is the whin-bush,
 massing its golden bloom;
 The cotton-grass low in the marshes
 tosses its small white plume;
 And from the hollows is wafted the
 scent of bog-myrtle or birch
 Fragrant after the rain; but, best of
 all, is the search
 Among the roots of the heather for
 stag-moss' antlers green
 Branching over the earth, far-spreading,
 and rarely seen.
 Here and there is a cottage, too,
 looking just like the heath,
 Green on the roof with house-leek,
 brown with its turf-wall beneath.

Children play at the door, they are
 dirty and happy and fair,
 Sunbrowned all of their faces, sun-
 bleached their lint-white hair;
 The mother is milking the cow, the
 dog lies coiled in the sun,
 The fowls for the roost are making
 and the labourer's day is done.
 Sometimes we rest on a bank, and
 hear in the evening calm,
 Just as the stars come out, the *sough* of
 their grateful psalm.

Often we go to the sea-marge, where
 the long sands give place
 To a belt of dark red storm-beaten
 crags, which grimly face
 The baffled billows that lie ever pant-
 ing below at their feet,
 Or gurgling in black-throated caves
 where still they mine and beat.
 Perched on the cliff is a village and
 far in the cove below
 The boats are beached on the shingle,
 waiting the tide to flow;
 Hard-visaged, bunchy women are
 baiting the lines in hope,
 Or carrying laden creels, slow, up the
 long, shelving slope,
 Or spreading their fish on the rocks, or
 welcoming men from the sea,
 As the lugger trips daintily in, and the
 flapping sail is free.

One thing strikes me about my
 husband's way with the folk,
 Whether the moorland shepherds, or
 fishermen perched on the rock.
 Freely we enter their homes, for he
 seems to be known to them all,
 And knows who is there in the corner,
 and who in the bed in the wall,
 And the idiot dreamily singing by the
 grandam racked with pain,
 And the lad that went off to the sea,
 and has never come back again—

All the home life of the people, their
 good and their evil hap.
 So every door flies open just after a
 warning tap,
 And everywhere he is met with a
 welcome glad and free;
 The dogs come fawning upon him, the
 children get up on his knee,
 Great, rough hands are held out to give
 him a hearty grip,
 And the mother's face is shining as he
 kisses the baby's lip.
 Of course they are happy to see me,
 too, for my husband's sake,
 Only they daintily touch me, as fear-
 ful perchance I may break,
 And, making ungainly curtseys, they
 have not a word to say;
 But oh, I am proud to see him so loved
 in this loveliest way.

Sometimes I think, for myself, I would
 like to tidy the room,
 To open the window a bit, and get rid
 of the smoke and the gloom,
 To teach the children a lesson, or read
 a page from the Book
 To the sick man tossed on his pillow,
 or the old man propped in his nook.
 But he does not try, in the least, to do
 any good, and yet
 Somehow they seemed to like him all
 the better for it.
 He is just like one of themselves, and
 talks of the weather and crops,
 The ewes and gimmers and lambs, or
 the luggers and nets and ropes,
 The take of fish, or the beds of mussels
 they have for bait,
 Or the old man's aching bones, or the
 teething baby's state,
 Laughing and joking with all, or telling
 a story, perhaps,
 To the children gaping around him,
 while grandfather nods and naps;

Yet somehow, all the time, he seems
 as if reading a book
 Full of nature and humour, and leaves
 with a thoughtful look.

Once I hinted that I would gladly be
 doing some good
 Among these neighbours of ours: and
 he said in his gentlest mood,
 "Yes, I suppose it is right to do all
 the good that you can;
 Only don't break up the peace of their
 homes, with a cut-and-dry plan
 Of tracts and visits and lessons, and
 scolding the women for dirt,
 And tramping on everyone's toes, and
 sitting on everyone's skirt.
 For when you know them as I do, and
 all their sorrows and cares,
 The brave hearts they keep through it
 all, their patience, their faith, and
 the prayers,
 Self-forgetting, that thrill here loud on
 the stormy shore
 For those on the stormy sea, they
 never may look on more,
 Then you may feel like me, half-
 ashamed of the good you can do,
 Compared with the good you are
 getting from lives so human and true.
 But try it—you're better than I—only
 mind they have hearts like your own;
 And hearts philanthropic, at times,
 have the trick of the old heart of
 stone."

November, 18—

What is it ails me now? I hardly
 have written a line
 For days and weeks and months in this
 private record of mine.
 I seemed to have nothing to say, and I
 did not seem to care,
 And the days have gone wearily by,
 though there was not a cloud in the
 air.

I think that my love is more, yet life
 is little and low,
 And surely a fulness of life from a
 fulness of love should grow,
 For love is summer, when all should
 be a-blooming and singing ;
 Yet none of the old things now the old
 sweet bliss are bringing.
 I go a-dreaming and weary, every day
 and all ;
 Something is aching within me, I fret
 at the simplest call
 Of commonplace duty that once I
 went about, cheerful and gay,
 Tripping and singing, light-hearted, all
 through the hours of the day.
 Everything burdens me now ; and I
 could cry at a kiss
 From the dear lips that I love so :
 What is the meaning of this ?
 I am not unhappy ; at least, I have
 nothing to make me : and yet
 My gladness is broken and dashed, and
 comes by the mood and the fit :
 I weep when I'm left alone ; and when
 he comes home, there are tears
 That mix with the smile of my greeting,
 and fill him with fond, loving fears.
 I want to be cheerful and happy, I
 want to be busy and good,
 Yet I lounge through the day, doing
 nothing, and plain like the dove in
 the wood.
 What can it be ? And my ring, too,
 will slip to my finger-tip,
 And it gives me a catch in the throat,
 and a pain, and a quivering lip :
 I know it is silly, and yet I cannot get
 rid of the fear
 That his love may grow loose as my
 ring, and be lost while I think it is
 here.

November, 18—

I wonder if every student sits brooding
 far into the night,

And hides from the wife of his bosom
 the thing he is fain to write.
 Can it be right to conceal the work he
 is labouring at ?
 I want to sit up beside him, but he
 will not listen to that ;
 Yet rest I cannot ; I lie there, sleep-
 less, and feigning to sleep,
 When, in the hush of the darkness,
 soft to my side he will creep,
 Fearing to rouse me lying, broad
 awake, all through the hours,
 Watching the moonbeams flitting, or
 hearing the patter of showers,
 The grey owl screech to the bat, or
 the moan of the throbbing sea,
 Or puzzling over the house-books,
 which will not come right with me.—
 We are not rich, and, maybe, I do not
 keep house as I might,
 Though I want to be thrifty, and debt
 is a thing that I hate outright ;
 Still there is waste, no doubt, and he
 has a right to complain,
 And maids are so careless, and break
 things that cannot be mended again ;
 And will have their young men com-
 ing : and how can I say them nay,
 When I recall how I longed to see
 him at evening grey ?
 I scrimp and save, and, at times, I am
 almost weary of life ;
 It would have been better for him had
 he married a managing wife.
 Yet all my cares were as nothing if
 only my husband were right,
 If he were not so silent by day, if he
 were not so dreamy at night,
 Cared for things in the house as he
 cared for them once on a time,
 Sat by my side in the evenings, and
 made my life sweet and sublime,
 Did he not joke at my questions—a
 wife is not meant for sport,
 Always put off with a jest ; and jesting
 is not his forte.

Yet oh he loves me, he loves ; and I
hate myself when I complain,
Only the hunger of love ever breeds
dream-visions of pain.

What is he always writing? Some-
times I tremble to think,

What, if it be of Religion? what, if
he be on the brink

Of falling away from the Faith, and
the way which his fathers trod,

And, as the minister told us, out of
the hand of God?

Rarely he goes to Church, though he
tells me I ought to go,

When the kirk-bells on the Sabbath
are chiming soft and low ;

“ You have your window,” he says,
“ for outlook on all the vast,

Dim, everlasting hills, and the shadows
on earth they cast,—

The old church-window that shines
with white-winged angel forms,

And martyred saints they are bearing
from earth’s most bitter storms ;

And life would be dark to you,
dear, lacking the light that it
brings,

Even though the cobwebs dim the
aureoles now, and the wings.

I have my outlook too, but not so
pretty as yours

With dreams of the saintly souls, and
the love that all endures ;

Colder my light and harder, but
clearer, at least, to me,

For cobwebbed angels somehow help
not my vision to see.

But to the same Eternal, we look for
the breaking day

Of an age that is surely coming, when
shadows shall flee away.”

I am troubled at sayings like these,
though I hardly know what they
mean,

And I pray that he yet may see the
truth which my heart has seen.

For oh he loves me, loves me, ever so
tender and true !—

And yet if he loves not God, too,
what shall my poor heart do?

December, 18—

Last night we went to Thorshaven ;
and the things that I heard and saw

Of the “ work ” now going on there
have filled me with wonder and awe.

I had been told of their meetings, and
how they rarely would cease

Till many were conscience-stricken,
and many were filled with peace ;

How the whole village was changed—
its drunkards sober and calm,

Lips that were wont to blaspheme now
thrilling the air with a psalm ;

Boats were launched with a prayer,
and the oars were timed to a hymn ;

And when the lines were set, or the
ropes and the sails were trim,

Someone took up the tale of the fishers
on Galilee,

And told how the Lord drew nigh to
them walking over the sea.

These were the marvels I heard, and
oh my heart longed to be there

Where the good Spirit was working,
and grace was like dew in the air

Dropping on thirsty grass, and making
it live anew.

Maybe my husband, beholding, would
see that the Gospel was true ;

Maybe his soul would be touched ;
and maybe my own dull faith

Would be refreshed and revived, for it
seemed at the point of death.

The night was starry and cold, but
just a night for a walk,

Brisk, in the tingling air ; and at first
I was fain to talk,

His coming had made me so glad then,
only my thoughts would not rest,

Flitting about like the swallows that
twitter around their nest,

And then skim away to the river, and
 dip where the shadows lie
 Clear in the glassy calm, which they
 flick with their wings as they fly ;
 So would I chatter a little ; and by
 and by thought was away
 To the village perched on the cliff,
 and the people there gathered to
 pray,
 So that in silence at length, arm in
 arm, swiftly we sped
 On by the beetling crags, till we came
 to a low rude shed,
 Roofed with the upturned hull of a
 wreck that had drifted ashore,
 Battered by surf on the shingle there
 for a month and more ;
 Gallantly once she had ridden the
 waves, and the tempest braved,
 And true hearts then had been lost in
 her ; now in her wreck they were
 saved.
 Crowds were thronging about it ; there
 was a crowd inside
 Singing a hymn that blended well with
 the wash of the tide—
 A wail of sorrow for sin, that swelled
 to a yearning hope ;
 Then I heard some one praying, but
 caught not the words nor the scope,
 For many were sobbing aloud ; we
 squeezed a little way in,
 Under a guttering candle stuck in a
 sconce of tin,
 The flame blown about by the wind,
 and shedding uncertain light
 Down on rough weather-beat faces.
 Clear and cold was the night ;
 Outside, the passionless moon and the
 quiet stars ; but here,
 Oh what a tempest of trouble and
 sorrow, and anguish and fear !
 Oh what a peace, at last, that folded its
 wings on a calm
 Throng of spirits entranced, and
 singing a grateful psalm !

He was a keen-eyed, wiry, beetle-
 browed man who spoke,
 The pale-faced smith of our village ;
 who pleaded loud with the folk,
 His voice half saying, half singing the
 faithful message he bore,
 Weirdly and hoarse, like the waves
 that were crashing down on the
 shore.
 It was not aught that he said—he was
 just a plain, blunt man,
 Earnest, I thought, and acquainted
 with God and the wonderful Plan
 Of saving by surety of Him who hung
 for our sins on the cross,
 And tasted death for our guilt, that
 we might have gain in His loss—
 A plain, blunt man, not a scholar ;
 sometimes his sayings were odd,
 Nor could I help a smile though he
 spake of the great thoughts of
 God ;
 But of the fisher-folk no one smiled,
 let him say what he would ;
 It was not a season for laughter, nor
 were they at all in the mood.
 “The strength of sin is the law,” he
 said ; “it is like the tree
 Serpents take for a purchase in lands
 where the serpents be ;
 Clean and straight is its trunk, as the
 law too is right in its scope,
 Slippery the coils and the folds round
 its bark that are twined like a rope,
 Crushing each bone of its victim, and
 grinding the life out, within ;
 So is the purchase of Law, for break-
 ing the soul by its sin :
 Oh how feeble and helpless we are in
 its terrible grip !
 For the Law cannot be broken, and
 these knots never will slip !
 Coming along the street, I saw the
 old serpent to-night,
 Plainly as eyes could behold him—and
 oh ’twas a sorrowful sight !—

Coiling round old men and children,
 as in a statue I know,
 Carved with his cunningest art by a
 wise Greek ages ago,
 But there to save His children the
 Father was wrestling grim,
 Here, as the serpent gripped them,
 they were all worshipping Him.
 Yes, I have seen the old serpent, the
 devil, the father of lies ;
 And he had not a hoof or a horn, or
 a tail to whisk at the flies ;
 Old men were buying his curses,
 children were taking his fire
 Home to their mothers in bottles, as
 briskly as hell could desire.
 Busy he is at Thorshaven, sails in your
 luggers with you,
 Never a boat goes to sea but the devil
 is one of the crew ;
 You carry him too in your creels, and
 he is defiling your way,
 With swearing and lying and cheating,
 and breaking the Sabbath day,
 And sins that I will not speak of, sins
 that all of you know.—
 But oh the blood of the Lamb, it will
 wash you whiter than snow.”
 Always he came back to that, the
 blood that was shed for sin,
 Cleansing our way on the earth, and
 purging the soul within ;
 He showed to me all my guilt, he
 showed me the love of God
 Until I wept at the plague of my heart,
 and the way I had trod,
 And the pity that sought me out, and
 the grace that died for me ;
 And all were sobbing and swaying
 about like the waves of the sea.
 Then one dropped on the floor, and
 writhed in a foaming fit ;
 “Glory to God,” cried the preacher,
 “He’ll snaffle the fiend with his bit ;
 Let her alone ; while the devil is
 wrestling with her we will pray ;

Peace will come like the stars, and
 light as the dawn of the day.”
 Then another was smitten, and lay
 there with never a breath
 In her thin nostril, it seemed, and
 pallid and cold as death ;
 I thought she was gone, till at length
 a smile of serenest grace
 Broke on her lips, and beamed all
 over her lovely face.
 She was the first to find Peace, and
 she said, “I have seen my love ;
 He’s not in the depths of the ocean,
 but high in the heavens above ;
 His head is not twined round with
 tangles, but wreathed with a wreath
 of palm,
 And lo ! in his hand is a harp, and
 loud in his mouth is a psalm.”
 (Her lover was drowned last spring,
 and his body had never been found,
 Till she saw him by faith, in her
 trance, robed in white raiment, and
 crowned.)
 Thus it went on for hours, at first
 with the women, but then,
 Ere long, the power and the wonder
 smote the strong hearts of the men ;
 Awed and amazed I stood, unable to
 stir from the place,
 Sometimes thinking my heart might
 be touched by its marvellous grace,
 Sometimes feeling my flesh creep at
 an unearthly voice,
 Sometimes thrilling to hear their songs
 who for joy did rejoice.
 At length there fell a great calm, and
 the lights were glimmering dim,
 And the moon was low in the heaven,
 when we sang the parting hymn.

On the way homeward I said, “Surely
 the Lord was there” ;
 And he, “No doubt, and up in yon
 star too, and everywhere ;

Hard to say where He is not. Wonderful? Yes, I admit;
 Hard to say what is not wonderful, when you look closely at it;
 Why, I have wondered for hours at a flower, or a lichened stone,
 Or star-moss red on the heath, or a star-fish dry as a bone
 On the grey shore, till the tide-wave brought back the pulses of life.
 But does not yon queer evangelist tell a good story, dear wife?
 Done them some good, you think? Ah! well, we will hope so at least;
 God is a chemist who works with stuff that would sicken a priest.
 I think it did good to that girl whose lover was drowned at sea,
 Gave her some comfort she needed; but it would not do good to me!"
 Thus I come home heavy-hearted; he always is ready to mock,
 Turning from anything serious, still with a good-humoured joke.

December, 18—

Now I know why he sits so late and alone in his room,
 And why there comes over his face that shadow I took for gloom,
 Which falls like a sudden haze all over the summer sky,
 And makes him look stony and cold, with a dream-like fixed eye,
 Seeing not what we see, for the outer vision is dim,
 As he looks on a world unseen, and hears it singing to him.
 Often it filled me with fear, for I thought he was wroth with me;
 But he is not angry at all—only trying, he says, to see
 Thoughts that are hard to get at, and hardly worth getting when done;
 But the fool's habit of dreaming he learnt when living alone;

I must not fancy he sulks; he was only a bit of a poet,
 Dram-drinking verses in secret, and hoping that no one would know it.
 So then he brought me some poems, writ for our marriage-day,
 "Orange-blossoms" he calls them, "A wreath for a wedding gay."
 I do not know that I care for poems—though hymns are sweet—
 I do not want to be talked of, or sung some day in the street,
 And at the time I was plagued with these horrible tradesmen's books,
 And maybe my words were dry, and listless also my looks.
 They are nice enough verses, I fancy—but oh those dreadful bills!
 And he just laughs at my trouble, and calls it the care that kills—
 A faithless terror of bakers and butchers and Philistines,
 Unworthy a true believer in orthodox, sound divines.

Well, they are pretty verses, and so I will write them here—
 But how can he pen such trifles with that shadow of debt so near?

ORANGE BLOSSOMS

BUDDING

It was the gloaming of the day,
 And first pale glimmer of the moon,
 The fishing-boats were in the bay,
 And to and fro they seemed to sway,
 Rhythmic, to a mystic tune,
 In the pale glimmer of the moon.

We sat us on a thymy bank,
 Where sea-pink and the wild-rose grew,
 And blue campanulas were rank,
 And wild geranium blossoms drank

Red sunsets that enriched their hue,
And pansies twinkled, gold and blue.

And fronting us the broad sea-sand
Spread, ribbed and freckled, to the spray
Crisp-curving to the curving land,
And plashing on the pebbly strand ;
Beyond, the vague, vast waters lay
Lazily heaving in the bay.

Three children played along the beach
With laughter, as the small waves
broke ;

I heard their laughter and their speech
Rippling along the sandy beach,
Though fear and trouble in me woke
Like the waves surging as they broke.

I told my love, and for a space
She gazed out far away from me.
O throbbing heart, how still the place !
Was that a smile that lit her face ?
Or but the moon drawn from the sea
To kiss the lips that can bless me ?

I told the love you knew before ;
You said, I did not need to tell,
And that you would not answer more,
For that I also knew before
The secret of your heart so well
It did not need that you should tell.

BLOOMING

O bleak November morning chill,
When trees are bare, and haws are ripe !
Hopping upon my window sill
I heard the cheery redbreast pipe ;
And through the crackling twigs there
ran
A twitter of birds since day began.

With great frost-ferns the panes were
white,
The fields were white with dust-like
snow,
The trees, all crystallised overnight,
In white robes made a ghostly show,

And where the fountain used to drip
The ice had clutched it in its grip.

Chanticleer at barn-door crew,
Geese were gobbling 'mong the stubble,
My dog in circles round me flew,
Barking loud at its shadow-double,
And ploughed the crisp frost with his
nose
Right where the clattering partridge
rose.

Crowding close, the dainty sheep
Nibbled by the bridled brook,
The hare pricked up her ears to leap
Behind the ricks to a quiet nook,
Knee-deep in straw the black ox lowed,
His every breath like a steaming cloud.

Jenny, looking tossed and tumbled,
Stept out with her milking-pails ;
Yawning Robin crept and grumbled,
Blowing on his finger-nails,
Tingling fingers, purple-tipped,
Sharply by the frost-wind nipped.

But I laughed at ice and snow,
Shouting to the shrill north wind ;
She is mine, I said, and no
Winter in the world I find ;
Love, my life is filled with thee,
And all is summer now with me.

BURSTING

O pathway through the meadow green,
And thou, grey stile, beneath the thorn,
And murmurous river softly borne
In dimpling ripples hardly seen,

Sweet path by happy footsteps worn,
If all our visions linger there,
The poet now shall find thine air,
More fancy-full than early morn.

We wandered in a dreamland fair,
Beside the huge, coiled willow trees,
Discoursing of a life to please
The Man who took our grief and care.

Not ours the dull, ignoble ease
Of cushioned seats, or routs and balls,
Brain-dulling dinners, civil calls,
And poor respectabilities ;

Not ours to care for marble halls ;
A modest home, and frugal fare,
With love for cobwebbed wines and
rare,
And peace for pictures on the walls—

For more than these we would not care :
But generous culture should be ours,
And pious use of all our powers,
And knowledge, as the primal pair

Knew all the beasts and birds and
flowers ;
And with our best we'd serve the Best,
And in His goodness find our rest,
Untroubled through the years and hours.

April, 18—

These were the first of the poems he
read to me up in my room ;
By and by others came, soon, like the
coming of spring with its bloom ;
And we are rich now and happy, and
everything goes quite smooth ;
All the newspapers praise him, but do
not say half of the truth :
I keep them all in a book, and read
them often alone ;

They make me angry at times, when
they speak in a critical tone,
But I am happy and proud, for now I
am nobody's debtor,
Paying odd things with a verse which
he writes me as fast as a letter.
He laughs at me, vowing that poets
should never pay bills, but draw

At large on the shopkeeping world,
exempt from all action at law ;
Honouring bakers and butchers enough
by eating their things ;
For angels pay not a jot for repairing
the plumes of their wings,
And bees are not charged by the
flowers they visit for tapping the
honey—
I am not quite sure what he means, but
I know he is loose about money.

May, 18—

Sick ! I am sure death is coming : I
never have felt like this ;
Such giddy sinkings and swimings,
and fainting away into bliss !
Life in the swooning of life, as if the
soul fluttered within,
Panting, exhausted, in hope to escape
from the body of sin !
Heart, O my heart so unquiet, why
wilt thou not be at rest ?
Clinging to this life of trouble, shrink-
ing from life of the blest !
Better to be with Jesus ! yet husband
and home too are dear ;
And oh if my love be a sin, I cannot
help sinning, I fear.
All other idols are broken, this one I
never can break.
Could I be shut out of heaven because
of the heaven that I make
Out of my true love to him, and out
of his great love to me,
Arching as deep blue sky still over a
deep blue sea ?

If this be death, as I take it, one thing
fain would I do,
Ere I go hence to the world where all
things are made new :
Again with my husband I'd walk, on
the quiet Sabbath day,
When bells from the old kirk chiming
call Christian souls to pray,

Down by the green footpath, and the
sweet-briar hedge that leads
Straight to the house of the Lord
through the clover-scented meads ;
Under the high - arched roof there
meekly to sit by his side,
In love to remember the Love that
bled for us once and died.
Oh it were good to think, if I should
be taken from him,
That once we sat there together, where
falls the light chastened and dim
Through the tall thin-shafted windows,
on hallowed bread and wine,
And vows that we vowed together, of
life for the love divine.
I cannot die till we do it : God would
not call me hence,
A broken life and unfinished, with a
fruitless influence.

June, 18—

Ah me ! we plot and plan, but the
great God orders all ;
And that is not good to Him, which
good we are fain to call.
Oh how I longed and hoped for the
high communion day !
Oh how my heart leaped up when he
did not say me nay !
Oh how I prayed, and was glad and
tremulous through the Fast !
Oh how happy I was, with my hand
on his arm, at last,
As gravely we paced together, down
by the broomy brae,
Along by the sweet-briar hedge, and
the clover-scented way,
All the maids robed in white, and the
men in their sober black,
Sweet birds a-singing, and sweet bells
ringing ; and Paradise back !
Better I never had spoken ; better he
had not gone !
Better a yearning sorrow than a heart
that is turned to stone !

What had come over our pastor, he so
gentle and mild,
Leading his flock to still waters as
father leadeth his child,
That day of all days, to preach terrors
of wrath and hell,
Darkening God's house with the
smoke of those in the pit that dwell ?
Oh it was dreadful to listen ! The
very Psalms that he chose
Rung in the ear like curses hurled at
the heads of foes ;
The prayers were dry and dewless, and
hard ; and my heart grew sick,
To glance at my husband's face with
its curious laughing trick :
I knew, in that furtive glance, that my
hope was worse than lost,
And that, in my effort to save, I had
perilled and harmed him most.
Pained there we sat in our pews, the
victims of one man's mood,
And vainly tried to be patient ; and
vainly tried to be good ;
E'en the sweet symbols of sorrow and
love of the Crucified
Failed to lighten the gloom, for he
took not his place by my side.
Never I sat at the Table so barren of
grace as then,
Joyless and undevout, and wroth at
the thoughts of men.
I had brought to the living water a
thirsting soul with care,
And there was no living water, but a
broken cistern there.

When we came home he sat alone in
his room for a while ;
But all that night he was gentle ; and
said, at last, with a smile,
" You want to know what I think of
our minister's work to-day ;
But shrink to ask me outright, for the
wild words you fear I may say.

Why should you dread me, Hilda?
 You wished to do me some good;
 So did the parson, no doubt, if he
 only had understood
 The right way of going about it. He
 made a mistake; that is all;
 Hell is the weak point, you see, and a
 cleverer general
 Were fain to conceal the spot where
 the foe might thrust him sore;
 But he is honest, and plays his tune by
 the regular score.
 You are vexed that I happened to hear
 only that loud devil's chorus—
 Very well done by the way—which
 brought all the horror before us,
 When you had hoped to have only the
 lyric of love and endurance,
 Swelling out high, at the close, to the
 joy and the hope and assurance.
 But it is all of a piece, love, whether
 you like it or no,
 All of it close-knit together; branched,
 but the branches grow
 Out of the same deep root. I heard
 but the part of a whole;
 I know that the chorus needed the
 lyric to melt the soul,
 The lyric implies, too, the chorus;
 whichever you chance to hear,
 Always the other is present to fill the
 heart or the ear.
 I am not an unbeliever, love; only I
 cannot wink
 At things I had rather not see, and
 thoughts I had rather not think;
 Does it not seem, too, an odd way of
 quickening love and faith,
 Picturing wrath that refuses e'en the
 grim mercy of death?
 The higher my vision of God, the
 more I can trust and pray;
 The better I seem to know Him, the
 broader appears the way;
 God and charity grow together; and
 I cannot see

Any dark moment of Time when
 Hope must cease to be.
 But will you hear what I thought as
 that sermon thundered on,
 With lurid flashes of horror, and God's
 heart turned to stone?

So then he read to me this—"Other-
 world ballad" he calls it—
 Of the meek soul that for love heeds
 not what sorrow befalls it,
 Heeds not the bliss and the glory, but
 longs for them that are lying
 Dim in the outer darkness, tossed in
 the anguish undying.
 What can I think of it? what? who
 will guide me aright—
 Me, a weak woman—to walk in the
 straight pathway of Light?
 Sometimes it rings in my ear as deadly
 as error could be;
 Sometimes I feel in my heart it is true
 as the gospel to me,
 A thing I would do, myself, just then
 when my faith is most,
 As I remember the love that suffered
 to save the lost.
 But through the years and the ages,
 the Church, unchanging, cries,
 Sad are the foolish virgins, and glad
 for ever the wise.
 Dare I trust my heart's voice against
 the voice of the whole?
 Yet should the roar of the crowd ever
 drown the true voice of the soul?
 Oh, if clear it were only!

THE SELF-EXILED

There came a soul to the gate of
 Heaven
 Gliding slow—
 A soul that was ransomed and forgiven,
 And white as snow:
 And the angels all were silent.

- A mystic light beamed from the face
Of the radiant maid :
But also there lay on its tender grace
A mystic shade :
And the angels all were silent.
- As sunlit clouds by a zephyr borne
Seem not to stir,
So to the golden gates of morn
They carried her :
And the angels all were silent.
- "Now I'll open the gate, and let her in,
And fling it wide,
For she hath been cleansed from stain
of sin,"
St. Peter cried :
And the angels all were silent
- "Though I am cleansed from stain
of sin,"
She answered low,
"I came not hither to enter in,
Nor may I go" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "I come," she said, "to the pearly
door,
To see the Throne
Where sits the Lamb on the Sapphire
Floor,
With God alone" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "I come to hear the new song they sing
To Him that died,
And note where the healing waters
spring
From His pierced side" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "But I may not enter there," she said,
"For I must go
Across the gulf where the guilty dead
Lie in their woe" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "If I enter heaven I may not pass
To where they be,
Though the wail of their bitter pain,
alas !
Tormenteth me" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "If I enter heaven I may not speak
My soul's desire
For them that are lying distraught
and weak
In flaming fire" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "I had a brother, and also another
Whom I loved well ;
What if, in anguish, they curse each
other
In depths of hell ?"
And the angels all were silent.
- "How could I touch the golden harps,
When all my praise
Would be so wrought with grief-full
warps
Of their sad days ?"
And the angels all were silent.
- "How love the loved who are sorrow-
ing,
And yet be glad ?
How sing the songs ye are fain to sing,
While I am sad ?"
And the angels all were silent.
- "Oh clear as glass is the golden street
Of the city fair,
And the tree of life it maketh sweet
The lightsome air" :
And the angels all were silent.
- "And the white-robed saints with
their crowns and palms
Are good to see,
And oh so grand are the sounding
psalms !
But not for me" :
And the angels all were silent.

"I come where there is no night," she said,

"To go away,
And help, if I yet may help, the dead
That have no day."
And the angels all were silent.

St. Peter he turned the keys about,
And answered grim :

"Can you love the Lord, and abide
without,

Afar from Him?"
And the angels all were silent.

"Can you love the Lord who died for
you,

And leave the place
Where His glory is all disclosed to
view,

And tender grace?"
And the angels all were silent.

"They go not out who come in here ;
It were not meet :

Nothing they lack, for He is here,
And bliss complete."

And the angels all were silent.

"Should I be nearer Christ," she said,

"By pitying less
The sinful living, or woeful dead
In their helplessness?"

And the angels all were silent.

"Should I be like Christ were I

To love no more
The loved, who in their anguish lie
Outside the door?"

And the angels all were silent.

"Did He not hang on the cursèd
tree,

And bear its shame,
And clasp to His heart, for love of me,
My guilt and blame?"

And the angels all were silent.

"Should I be liker, nearer Him,
Forgetting this,
Singing all day with the Seraphim,
In selfish bliss?"

And the angels all were silent.

The Lord Himself stood by the
gate,

And heard her speak
Those tender words compassionate,
Gentle and meek :

And the angels all were silent.

Now, pity is the touch of God

In human hearts,
And from that way He ever trod
He ne'er departs :

And the angels all were silent.

And he said, "Now will I go with
you,

Dear child of love,
I am weary of all this glory, too,
In heaven above":

And the angels all were silent.

"We will go seek and save the lost,
If they will hear,

They who are worst but need me
most,

And all are dear":

And the angels all were silent.

July, 18—

O my baby, my baby ! O sweet sun-
beam of bliss !

Brightening my earth for a moment as
with a heaven-sealing kiss :

Oh the sweet smile on his lips ! it
haunts me by night and day !

All his brief life was a smile that
slowly faded away,

As if he just looked in on us here, on
his heavenward road,

And saw that we were not meet to
rear up the child of God.

Sometimes I try to think, oh, what a
 joy to have given
 Child of mine to the host that serve
 and praise in heaven!
 He did not need to be christened, his
 robes were clean and white,
 Touching the earth but a moment, he
 passed to the realm of light.
 Sometimes I shudder to think of the
 earth and the little grave
 Under the great church tower where
 the budding poplars wave.
 O my baby, my baby! whether in
 heaven or there,
 Why am I here, and my baby left
 with no mother's care?
 I thought I was dying at one time—
 would I were dying to-day;
 O my baby, how could the Father
 take thee away?

August, 18—

Winnie has come: my husband
 thought it might cheer me a bit,
 Having an old friend near me, clever
 and sparkling with wit,
 Sharing old memories with me, full of
 the gossip of town—
 The last new book or picture, or
 fashion of bonnet or gown.
 And she was nice, at first, with her
 chatter about the old times,
 When we were schoolmates, and
 sauntered under the oaks and limes,
 And heard the hum of the bees, and
 the hum of our future in them,
 Or watched the swift, brown squirrels
 climbing the grey beech-stem;
 Bright little pictures she cut me out of
 the old school-world—
 All about how we were dressed, and
 drilled, and scolded, and curled,
 And lectured; and then she knows
 where all the girls have gone—
 This with her husband to India, that
 to New Zealand alone,

Trusting to pick up a husband some-
 where away in the bush,
 Or, maybe, to set up a school, or to
 open a shop at a push.
 May Grant, the wildest of us, has
 married a Low Church vicar,
 Who holds by the orthodox faith, and
 port as the orthodox liquor;
 While Helen, her sister, is all for
 chasubles, roods, and stoles,
 Liftings and bowings, and Catholic
 manner of saving souls;
 Elphie Deering has sold herself to a
 widower,
 And drives in her carriage past his son
 who once courted her;
 Others are strumming pianos, or
 working in Berlin wools
 Pictures of foolish youths for catching
 the youthful fools;
 Lizzie Morrit is dead—she was jilted
 by a dragoon,
 When all her fortune appeared to be
 railway shares in the moon.
 Winnie is clever, but sharp and
 sarcastic; and lays herself out
 To please the men by her wit, which
 she scatters like sparks about;
 No matter who may smart, if only
 herself may shine
 With her spirits unflagging, that sparkle
 and gleam like wine.
 I do not quite like her way with my
 husband; but all the same
 I laugh, and she does me good, and I
 really am glad that she came.

September, 18—

Surely Winnie is changed; we ne'er
 had been friends together,
 Had she always been ready to sting
 like a wasp in October weather.
 I think there is hardly a name she has
 not some story about—
 Of all that we knew long ago—a story
 suggesting a doubt.

Each face that I used to remember as
 beaming with kindly light,
 Is smirched with something or other,
 and no one escapes her spite.
 Sneering with scornful laughter, turn
 wherever she may,
 All the glory is dimmed of all that
 come in her way ;
 She creeps on the noblest natures
 stealthily as a cat,
 Now with a bite of venom, and now
 with a wanton pat,
 Leaving them not till crushed. And
 one thing I cannot abide,
 The way that she flatters my husband
 even when I am beside,
 Now flopping down on her knees, and
 staring up in his face,
 Claspng her hands, and feigning an
 ecstasy quite out of place ;
 Pumping up tears at his pathos, or
 sighing with heaving breast,
 Or giggling and clapping her hands
 when his humour is wickedest.
 He is weak enough to believe her,
 which makes me colder in praise,
 And I care for poetry less than I ever
 did all my days.
 She flatters him daily with words that
 are silky and soft and sleek,
 And no true wife can be pleased when
 seeing her husband weak.

'Tis growing quite dreadful to hear
 her now and then, when she speaks
 Jauntily of a Faith that needs no God,
 nor seeks
 To trace His work on the earth, or
 follow His way on high,
 Noting His glorious footprints clear in
 the starry sky ;
 For Nature has in herself the reason
 for all that is,
 And God is an unscientific, needless
 hypothesis,

Like witches, ghosts, and miracles—
 dreams of the slumbrous night
 Which the great dawn of reason has
 driven away with its light !

Thereto my husband made answer—
 and oh I was proud and glad ;
 "Look you, Miss Winnie," he said,
 "it's your method of science that's
 bad ;
 Good for its own end, of course ; but
 here it is clearly at fault ;
 God is not found by the tests that
 detect you an acid or salt.
 While you search only for secrets that
 process of science sets free,
 Nothing you'll find in the world, but
 matter to handle or see.
 Here is a book I am reading now ;
 what can your method find there ?
 Boil it, or burn it, dissect it, let
 microscope scan it with care ;
 What does it show you but paper and
 ink and leather and thread,
 All made of chemical simples that, no
 doubt, you have in your head ?
 But where is the thought, which is all
 the end and use of the book,
 And which flows on through its pages
 clear to my mind as a brook,
 Rippling and singing sweet music to
 him that hath ears to hear ?
 Have you an acid will test it ? a glass
 that will make it all clear ?
 Or scalpel to cut it ? And yet paper
 and leather and ink
 All are but trash, if I find not
 the thought which the writer can
 think.
 What, now, if Spirit and God are
 the thought which is written out
 plain
 On the great page of the world,
 and your method of seeking is
 vain ?"

October, 18—

I'll not bear this any longer. I know
that his heart is mine ;
But in my house no girl shall make
my life sicken and pine.
When dead—which may soon be—
they may do what they list ; I
shall be
With my sweet baby, who now smiles
out of the darkness on me ;
My baby, whose soft little hands pull
steadily at my heart,
To think of the better land, and cleave
to the better part.
But this is my home while I live, and
none shall bring trouble to it ;
And he is my own while I live, and
she, with her saucy wit,
Shall not come between him and me.
He cares not for her in the least ;
If she respected herself she might see
that the west and the east
Are not more sundered than he from a
woman who stings and pricks ;
He laughs at her sallies of wit, but he
sees through all of her tricks.
I know what is due to a wife ; she
thinks me a poor, silly fool,
But I can be dignified too, and I don't
mean to sit down and pule.
Only last evening my ring slipped from
my finger, and ran
Under her chair—my finger is thin
and wasted and wan—
And picking it up, she put it, before
my eyes, on her own,
Bidding him look how it fitted her,
tight to the joint and the bone,
Just as if meant for her hand. And
this was my marriage ring !
How can she sit by my fire, and smile
in my face and sting ?
Oh it is dreadful, a woman who has
innuendoes and arts,
And looks so simple and sweet, while
she is breaking hearts.

Yet I heed not her sneering ; but oh
to be once more alone,
To lay my head on his shoulder, and
thrill at the old true tone
Of love that cherished me once, ever
petting his fond little wife,
And, making a nest for me, rounded off
all the angles of life.
Not that I care for petting—I'm not
of the March-blossom kind,
Best in its velvet-sheath wrapt up from
the blustering wind ;
Rough weather I could bear, if only
his heart were true
Unto the love he once bore me, and
unto the God he once knew.

That is what troubles me most. The
time was I prayed him to read
Daily the Book where my soul found
help in my sorest need,
Light when my day was dark, and
strength to my fainting will,
Comfort in time of trouble, and healing
from every ill.
Now there is nothing dread so much
as a text from him,
It is as if all the old stars of heaven
were changed and dim,
Were not in their old places, and had
not the same clear sense,
Nor dropt on my spirit the dews
which gave it a gladness intense.
Changed is the meaning of all, though
he keeps to the words and names ;
They are new pictures that look now
out of the antique frames ;
They are new words that he sings now
to the old tunes I know ;
And strange is the taste of the streams
now that in the old channels flow.
“Lo ! as the rod of Aaron,” he says,
“to minds perplexed
The critical art brings water e'en out
of the flintiest text,

Clears a way through the desert, and
 gives to us angels' bread,
 And quickens anew to life the faith
 that was well-nigh dead."
 But when I'm fain to learn the faith he
 is fain to boast,
 Oh but it seems like another God
 speaking to men not lost;
 No more the gate is strait, nor heaven
 is hard to win,
 No more the world is fallen, nor death
 the wages of sin—
 No more is there a curse now crucified
 on the tree—
 No more any Redeemer, nor ransom
 paid for me.
 Nothing is as it used to be; nothing is
 what it seems;
 Nothing says what it used to say; and
 the old Faiths are all dreams;
 Blindly the saints read the Scriptures,
 and like dotards obeyed them—
 They've taken away my Lord, and I
 know not where they have laid
 Him
 Now when I say this to him, he laughs
 in his good-humoured way,
 Putting me off with a jest, as one with
 a child might play,
 Which is not fair to his wife, however
 silly I be,
 And I am no fool, although I be not
 so clever as he.
 But Winnie, seeing me vexed thus,
 silently smiles where she sits,
 Turning her eyebrows up, and sharpen-
 ing her scornful wits,
 Adding perhaps, by and by, "Ye
 buried your Lord in a creed,
 Dark as the Golgotha tomb, and there
 He lay dead, indeed;
 Should you complain that He is not
 there for you still to embalm
 With unguents and spices, the while
 ye praise your dead Christ in a
 psalm?

If there's a chance for your gospel to
 live, which I very much doubt,
 It is in this new resurrection the critics
 would fain bring about,
 Laying aside the grave - clothes,—
 dogma, miracle, myth,
 All the dust that the ages have covered
 His glory with,—
 That we may look on the simple man
 as He lived and died,
 Loved and loving and worshipped, and
 hated and crucified."
 So does she cap his wild words with
 others more wild, and a sneer
 Hardens her voice as she speaks, and
 grates on my heart while I hear.

November, 18—

Winnie has left us at length. I had
 some trouble about it;
 He laughed at her flattery, vowing he
 hardly could live now without it,
 Called her a nice little goose, his
 Caberfae, with the head,
 Brown, of a startled deer just raised
 from its ferny bed;
 And not a thing would he do, and
 never a word would he say;
 It was no business of his; the girl
 might go or stay;
 He would have nothing to do with it;
 women had ways of their own,
 No man could venture on trying, of
 letting their wishes be known.
 He trusted I did not think his heretic
 heart was smit
 By a girl, because her tongue had a
 trick of heretical wit;
 Sure, he was sound in heart, whatever
 his head might be;
 And, if not very devout, he was devoted
 to me;
 And held to the saying of Paul as the
 strong hope of his life,
 That maybe the faithless husband was
 saved by the faith of his wife.

That is the way that he speaks now,
 always with some poor jest,
 Leaving a text in the mouth with a
 strange and a bitter taste.
 So he left me that morning. Oh, how
 my heart beat wild !
 As I went into my room, and prayed
 to be kept then meek and mild,
 Speaking the truth in love ; and I said
 to myself a psalm
 That nerved my soul to be patient, and
 dignified too and calm.
 Hardly I know what followed. I
 meant to be firm, but kind,
 And for her own sake tell her the
 thing that was in my mind ;
 But on the hint of it only, Winnie
 broke out in wrath,
 Scornful, vowing that I had all along
 darkened her path,
 Made her life fruitless, and that she
 laughed at my pious advice ;
 I was but a watery saint, and lapt in a
 fool's Paradise ;
 And she could shatter my baby-bliss,
 if she cared to do it.
 Oh how she pitied my husband ! mated,
 and now, too, he knew it,
 Wived by mistake, with one who was
 wife of his weakness only,
 Hardly a housekeeper even, and leaving
 his intellect lonely,
 Having no part in his genius, meeting
 no play of his wit,
 Standing outside of his true life, only a
 drag upon it !
 Vain and weak as he was, had he met
 but a woman of mind
 He yet might have run in the race,
 but now he is left far behind.
 Thus she broke out in her wrath, and
 packing her boxes the while,
 Stole a look as she stabbed me, hiding
 a venomous smile,
 Furtive ; but I was heedless of all
 that she said about me,

Till the slighting of him made me
 wroth, as a wife should be.
 Pity I lost my temper ; but, all the
 same, truly I would
 Lose it to-morrow again if they say of
 him aught but good.
 Altogether it was a weary and heart-
 less day,
 But there is light towards evening, and
 peace, too, for she is away.

BOOK THIRD

WINIFRED URQUHART,
MATERIALIST

AT "Prinkle's Establishment,
 On principles strictly religious,
 For finishing girls," I spent
 A year in a manner egregious ;
 'Twas a school of the calender kind,
 Meant to put a fine gloss on the mind.

It was there I met Hilda Dalguise,
 And thought her enchantingly fair,
 With drops of blue heaven for her
 eyes,
 And bands of sunbeams for her hair,
 And the form of a dainty, round dove
 Just made for soft touches of love.

I was not of the gushing-girl sort ;
 My soul with ambition was fired,
 My tongue something sharp at retort,
 And the people were few I admired :
 And I know I detested a saint
 More than gambling and powder and
 paint.

Yet I once had a fit of devotion,
 And worked in the Sunday school,
 And whipt up a frothy emotion,
 And prayed, and behaved like a fool ;
 Till my eyes were opened to see
 I was growing a small Pharisee.

But with Hilda I felt I could sit
 All the day, just stroking her hair,
 Now to smile at her sweet lack of
 wit,
 Now to kiss her, for love, anywhere,
 To pat her soft hand, or be near
 The pink, pearly shell of her ear.

Sweet-breath'd as a baby, her mind
 Smelt all of the mother's milk still—
 Infant prayers, childish hymns, and
 the blind,
 Pretty faiths they are fain to instil;
 And she seemed, in her white, fluffy
 dress,
 Like a bird I must stroke and caress.

I pitied the beautiful child,
 Knowing life as I thought that I did,
 With her pure soul as yet undefiled,
 Always doing the thing she was bid,
 And believing all hearts were as true
 As the one little heart that she knew.

I was just a year older than she,
 But twenty years older in thought:
 She hardly knew more than the bee
 That wots where the honey is got,
 Nor dreams that the great purple bell
 Has poison hid in it as well.

Yet now I'm not sure that I knew
 So very much more than she did:
 There's an instinct for all that is true,
 And for all by wise Nature forbid,
 Which is deeper than such wit as then
 I had gathered of life and of men.

I was young, and I thought myself
 old;
 A fool, and conceited me wise;
 I ran my crude thoughts in a mould
 That shaped the crude thoughts
 into lies
 With a kind of Byronic belief
 In a world full of baseness and grief.

How much I have lived since then!
 What rubs I have gotten and given!
 Some whine for their childhood again,
 Some pine for the quiet of heaven:
 But my tent, I have no mind to
 strike it;
 'Tis a nice, wicked world, and I like it.

Old Prinkle I took for a prude,
 With her hands in her black thread-
 mits,
 Chap-fingered, and painfully good,
 Yet half-scared out of her wits;
 And at first I could not make out
 What troubled a soul so devout.

'Twas not the mere burden of care
 For a score of commonplace girls,
 Whose manners and dresses and hair,
 Their finger-nails, teeth, and their
 curls,
 With their morals and dinners and
 laughter,
 'Twas her calling in life to look after.

But parents and guardians then wanted,
 For girls at a "Finishing School,"
 The old wine of Faith well decanted
 Into flasks which must also be full
 Of the world, and of woman's ambition
 To better her single condition.

So she had to be worldly-wise,
 And train us for "marrying well";
 And she had to put on a disguise,
 And warn us of Death, too, and Hell;
 For the earthly young soul must be
 given
 At least a top-dressing of Heaven.

'Twas against the grain, I admit,
 For she'd fain have been honest and true
 She had neither much culture nor wit,
 She was simply a woman that knew
 About womanly ways and things,
 Such as colours and dresses and rings.

A good soul, kindly and just,
But timid, and living in ways
She would never have chosen, but must,
If she meant to live out all her days
In the highly respectable station
Of finishing sound education.

Not a person to train the young mind,
For she was not at all intellectual,
And oft her religion would find
All its efforts were quite ineffectual
To fix her stray thoughts on devotion,
Or show the least touch of emotion.

Thus, when sermon was over at noon
On Sunday, she'd question us on it ;
But her speech would wander off soon
To a ribbon, a gown, or a bonnet—
Or anything pretty or new
She had seen in the minister's pew.

She used to bubble and bell
About ladylike manners and ways,
In soft purling accents that well
Suggested her own brighter days ;
Then sighed and looked timid about,
As if sure that she should be found out.

And the terror that haunted her so
Was fear of the Governess, Lane,
Who was dismal and dreary as snow
When it thaws in the drizzle of rain,
And sharp-eyed, and wanted the school,
And held our dear Prinkle a fool.

Lane had laws for all that we did,
And for every hour of the day ;
This and that we were strictly forbid,
So and so we were always to say ;
And we lived, like nuns in their cells,
'Mid an hourly ringing of bells.

We never did any great wrong,
Such as schoolboys would do on a hint ;
And therefore she had to be strong
On the tithing of anise and mint ;

And taught us to wet our hard pillows
At the lightest of light peccadilloes.

Oh, the old-maiden morals we had,
So scrupulous, prim, and demure !
What the decalogue never forbade
Our consciences could not endure :
But life was so low-pitched and sad,
It was quite a relief to be bad.

Then, the wearisome lessons !—the
proper,
Dull prose that we read every day,
Which felt as if boiled in a copper
To take all the flavour away !
And the colourless paragraphs writ
Without reason or fancy or wit !

Yet the poems were worse ; they
were so
Lack-a-daisical pretty-sublime,
Spurting upward in little jets d'eau
To fall with a musical chime ;
And we mouthed the sweet verses,
Good Heavens !
How we mouthed, all at sixes and
sevens !

Then the darning and hemming and
stitching,
The broidery and the brocade,
The Berlin-wool figures bewitching,
And the wonderful trees that we
made,
Like green triangles in bloom
Stuck hard on the stick of a broom !

And the scales that we practised
for hours,
Till we hated the sight of the keys !
And the evenings when, ranged out
like flowers,
We had our æsthetical teas,
With music, charades, and advices,
While the parents had biscuits and
ices !

French was taught by a starved refugee
 Who had hurled at all tyrants defiance ;
 And a student, who stormed like
 the sea,
 Administered globules of science
 Well wrapt up in texts to make sure
 That the bane should have always
 its cure.

And thus we were "finished" at last
 On principles strictly religious,
 Made ready "to come out" and cast
 Our lines in the ocean prodigious ;
 And begin the true business of life,
 To find some one in want of a wife.

I do not blame Prinkle the least—
 She did what they asked her to do ;
 They did not wish knowledge increased
 Of the wise and the right and the true ;
 But they would have a gloss of devotion
 On girls who had not a notion,

Except just to marry and dress,
 And to see to their cooks and their
 dinners,
 And live on in soft idleness,
 And on Sunday to call themselves
 sinners,
 And be mothers, ere long, of more fools
 To be sent to more "Finishing schools."

They were all odious girls, except
 Hilda ;
 And she was a saint, and a pest
 To Julia, Maria, Matilda,
 Amelia, Joan, and the rest ;
 For her conscience was sure to forbid
 Many things that we all of us did.

I never liked saints, as a rule,
 Always flapping their texts in your face,
 With warnings of sorrow and dule
 To be dree'd in that sulphurous place ;
 Meanwhile they do no good in this,
 As they strain at their glamour of bliss.

But Hilda you could not help loving—
 She was not too prosily pious ;
 And often our ways disapproving,
 Yet she always stood faithfully by us ;
 And did not pretend to condemn
 Earthly things, while she coveted them.

She was not at all clever, except
 That she warbled a song like a bird ;
 You'd have sat through a whole night,
 and wept
 In a trance of delight, as you heard
 The thrill of that exquisite strain,
 Like the nightingale's lyrical pain.

Why do I dwell on all this,
 Recalling those tender, low notes ?
 And why would I give for one kiss
 Of her lips all my long-treasured
 thoughts ?
 Pshaw ! who ever yet understood
 The why of each whimsical mood ?

Besides, it's not true ; it is only
 A waft of old sentiment blown
 O'er my mind, as I sit rather lonely
 Recalling the days that are gone ;
 But now is far better than then,
 For I live in the thoughts of great men.

When I left old Prinkle's I said,
 "Life is good, and I'll seek my good
 in it ;
 'Twill go hard if my hand and my head
 Cannot work for success there, and
 win it ;
 But I have not much beauty to boast,
 I shall ne'er be a "belle" or a "toast."

So I felt as I turned from my glass,
 Having looked at the brown little
 features ;
 The eyes and the forehead might pass,
 For they were an intelligent creature's ;
 But the mouth had a sneer rather bitter,
 When a young-lady simper were fitter.

But my brains I could trust to for
 thinking,
 My fingers were clever to write,
 And thus when my heart was half
 sinking,
 It rose again higher in might;
 And I vowed that I would not be sold
 For treasures of silver and gold.

I do not affect to despise
 The riches that make a full life,
 With pictures and books and fair eyes,
 Beaming on you, of mistress or wife;
 Were I man, I would purchase, of
 course,
 A mansion, a maid, and a horse.

But it's not the same thing to be sold,
 And, perhaps, to be laid on the shelf,
 As it is to have and to hold
 These chattels and goods for yourself;
 And, besides, I was tired of the way
 Men talked, who had nothing to say.

So I gave up the young-lady life,
 The novels, the calls, and the moping,
 And the hope to be somebody's wife,
 And the cherished girl-dream of
 eloping,
 Or doing some thing that would ring
 Unlike the dull commonplace thing.

I said, Men are stronger than we,
 Though our minds be as subtle as
 theirs;
 For they train the high Reason to see,
 While we put on fantastical airs,
 And are fain to look silly, although
 Our folly has cunning below.

But I would be true to my sex,
 Would learn with the boldest to think,
 Would grapple with things that perplex,
 Would stand on the verge and the brink
 Where the seen and the unseen are met,
 There to gather what truth I could get.

I had "finished" my education,
 But I found it was now to begin;
 For formless and void as creation,
 With the wan, diffuse light breaking in
 On the first day of darkness, I knew
 Neither what nor how I should do.

So I read from morning till night,
 Brows knit, and with resolute brain,
 Till darkness turned slowly to light;
 Yet it came with an aching pain,
 For I passed not a word or a jot,
 Till it gave up its treasure of thought.

Yet vague and unguided, I missed
 The right path among many ways,
 And found myself folded in mist
 Of a dim metaphysical haze,
 Till I went up to town, and began
 The true science-study of man.

Then the first thing I learnt was,
 to know

I had everything yet to learn—
 To begin with the taproots that grow
 In the life we can faintly discern,
 And trace from the great mother-earth
 The growth of our thought and
 our worth.

It was to an uncle I went,
 A learned physician in town,
 Whose evenings of leisure were spent
 In converse with men of renown,
 Who joined in a happy alliance
 Of politics, letters, and science.

They talked of the small and the
 great,
 They spoke of the near and the far,
 They searched the dim secrets of
 Fate,
 They traced through the fire-mist
 and star
 The growth of the marvellous Whole,
 And birth of the mind and the soul.

They asked for no God to explain,
They asked but slow shaping of time
To account for the thought in the
brain,

And the conscience of duty and crime,
And the rich, varied life of the creature,
With its changes of organ and feature.

What a world of high wonder was this,
Growing all out of atoms in motion!
Crowned at length with the glory and
bliss

Of life in the earth and the ocean!
And all by the pure force of law,
Without error or failure or flaw!

So I turned to hard study of science—
I had tasted it mixed up with creed,
But I broke up that foolish alliance,
Seeking truth, and the truth does not
need

Poor safeguards of faith to secure
That the heart shall be humble and pure.

Truth only is good for the soul,
Truth only is safe to pursue,
And Truth will her secrets unroll
But to him who is fearless and true,
And will search out the fact with
his test,
And bow where the reason is best.

I had the clear courage of truth,
And plunged into Häckel at once;
The way was not easy and smooth
As they make ways in England and
France:

But then it was thorough, and that
Was the end I was fain to be at.

How I toiled now that I had the key,
And gathered up fact and example!
How the world opened up unto me
As knowledge grew lucid and ample!
I hewed through the jungle a way
From the dark into clearness of day.

All realms of dear nature I sought,
Far and near, both the vast and minute,
What from depths of the sea had been
brought,

What had lain in the rocks at the root
Of the hills, and the dead and alive
From the lair and the nest and the hive.

Girls called with their mothers to see
The treasures my patience had stored,
And talked with a simper to me
Of the wonderful works of the Lord,
And the beautiful butterfly wings,
And the fishes and insects and "things."

They knew not the thoughts that I
thought,

They dreamed not the visions I saw,
They wist not that, still as I wrought
In the footsteps of infinite law,
Their creeds seemed as vanishing cloud
Which had wrapped the dead mind in
a shroud.

How I laughed at their priests, now
I knew
The high priests of nature serene,
Who sought but the clear and the true,
And the law which for ever hath been,
And scorned every meaningless phrase
Where a lie lay, perdue, in a haze.

I thought how they spent their rich
lives,
Sweeping heaven for lost links in the
stars,

Or brooding o'er bees in their hives,
Or watching the ants in their wars,
Or peering with keen microscope
Where the vibriole whirls in the drop,

Or freezing through chill Arctic
winters,
Ice-bound in the Polar sea,
Or daring wild beasts and adventures
For a tropical bird or a tree;

While the vicar grows wheezy and fat,
And the minister sleek as a cat.

The apostles^o and martyrs, I said,
Of our new modern world are these ;
They have struggled and suffered
And bled,
They have sought neither honour
nor ease,
But they lead the great march in
the van
Of progress and freedom for man.

Facts, ordered and tested with skill,
They gather, which surely declare
The law which all beings fulfil,
And how through all ages they fare
From the cell to the organ, and soar
Ever up from the less to the more.

How my bosom swelled high as I rose
To the height of that formative thought,
And saw the dim fire-mist disclose
The world^s when as yet they were not,
And the life which was one day to
flower
From its subtle and manifold power.

What a poem of nature was there !
How it linked all being in one,
The tree and the bird in the air,
And the lichen that tints the grey stone,
And the coral that builds the wild reef,
With man and his glory and grief !

They tell of a Fall bringing thorns,
They talk of a Lost Paradise,
They prate of a devil with horns
Ever plotting some wicked device,
They will have it that death entered in,
When Eve ate the apple of sin.

But truth, searching out the old myths,
Sees growth evermore going on,
And, breaking old fetters like wyths,
Finds death when no sin could be done ;

Not a lapse, but a law of survival,
Where the fittest treads down its weak
rival.

Poor fools ! we keep wrapping our
minds
In the old tattered rags of the Jew,
And shiver and shake as fresh winds,
Cloud-driving, make larger our view ;
And we draw our rags closer about,
Though the faith be as chill as the
doubt.

But this is the truth that alone
Can save from the fever and fret,
That the high law changeth for none,
That it holds all enmeshed in its net,
And that life and death and endeavour
Ever have been, and shall be for ever.

And life is the fuller for each
Whose death makes it richer for all ;
Immortal the race, bound to reach
Ever onward ; but singly we fall
Into dim silent graves on the road,
As the weary soul lays down its load.

But the dim, silent graves by the way
Are the footprints of progress for man ;
And we are not so selfish as they
Who only will die, if they can
Hope to knit up again from the dead
The old tangled hank of their thread.

A nobler faith ours ; for we know
That the organs, dissolving for ever,
Shall paint the spring-flowers as they
grow,
But we shall return again never ;
And we grudgenot the life that shall give
Larger life unto them that do live.

We work for the good of the whole ;
We work, and the rest cometh soon ;
We work with no fear for the soul ;
We work in a light as of noon ;

And the peace, by and by, shall be
ours
Of the long drowsy grass and the
flowers.

We have faith ; we have passed from
the mist
Of doubt and denial and fear
Into high and calm realms that are
kissed
By the sunshine of certainty clear ;
And the great thought of duty is
freed
From the dross of a self-seeking creed.

Oh the gladness I had as this grew
Into clearness now day after day !
At first, I shrank back from the new,
Startling thoughts that it brought into
play,
And the courage of truth that it
needed,
And the loneliness as it proceeded.

But plunging, at length, in the tide,
I flung off the shivering fit
As the current swept stately and wide,
And I cast myself wholly on it ;
And slowly the loneliness found
A gladsome life gathering round.

No shade of a drear world to come
Lay dismally now on my earth ;
No fruitless regretting struck dumb
The laughter of light-hearted mirth ;
I had conscience to prompt me, of
course,
But never to sting with remorse.

The needle that points to the Pole
Does not prick the poor sailor who
errs
As the big billows tumble and roll,
Or the long swell throbs and stirs ;
But simply, by night and by day,
The needle just tells him the way.

Even so was I merry and glad
As I walked in the law and the light ;
And so was I not very sad
When I wandered at times from the
right ;
And ever a needle was true,
And showed me the thing I should do.

I did not sin and repent,
And then fall a-sinuing again,
As if conscience were properly meant
To keep up a blister of pain ;
But I tried to walk in the truth,
And to lose not a joy of my youth.

They say that a vanishing creed
Makes the heart very weary and sad,
That its wounds must open and
bleed,
That its ways must be evil and bad ;
But I ne'er was in happier mood,
Nor so true to the right and the good.

Well ; just then, I heard, by the
way,
That Hilda was wedded, and wrote
A well-meaning letter to say
How it pleased me to think of her lot,
Reminding her, too, like a fool,
Of a promise she gave me at school.

I offered a visit, to share
In the joy of a life that I loved ;
But I fancy she did not just care
To be kissed and "honeyed" and
"doved"
Before me, but would be alone
Till the honeymoon sweetness was
gone.

So she put me off for a year
With this and the other excuse,
Not one of them simple and clear,
But all of them shifty and loose ;
And yet when she finally sent,
And asked me to visit, I went.

Then I dropt on a scene quite idyllic,
A nook of the old Paradise—
A rose-embowered cot on a hillock,
With a garden sunny and nice,
And my saint and her poet too yawning
At the commonplace life that was
dawning.

I cannot describe ; but I know
The country was not picturesque ;
The granite lay barren below,
And a broad moor, as flat as my desk,
Stretched inwards, and down to the
sea
There was hardly a bush or a tree.

But inside was pretty enough ;
The rooms all so fresh and so sweet—
Not a jar, or a word that was rough,
Not a thing but was dainty and neat,
And Hilda so gentle and still,
Though the meek little fool had a
will.

I did not much take to her now ;
She seemed to be stunted in growth,—
A pale, sickly bloom on a bough,
A flat, tasteless thing in the mouth ;
A chaste, cold, passionless ghost,
Weeping much for a babe she had
lost.

I tried to cheer her a bit,
But she did not interest me ;
She never did smack much of wit,
But now she was dull as the sea
When the east wind blows its grey
haar,
As it moans on the sand and the bar.

It was always that baby, forsooth !
As if blossoms had never been nipt,
As if lambs never died in their youth,
As if no other babies had slipt
Away to the peace of the worm
From life, and its trouble and storm.

But her Poet was really a man ;
Not a clinker only of rhymes,
But one who could thoughtfully scan
The world, and the men, and the
times,
And see their meanings, and sing
The vision of life which they bring.

He was not the least of a saint ;
But worked, with a patient might,
In the Artist's unconstraint,
With the Artist's frank delight
In the quaint and the unexpected
Moulds which his thought selected.

Still mooning in twilight dim,
His humour was just to croon
Any song that was pleasing to him,—
Fresh words to the old, old tune,
And his thought was but half-expressed
In the manner of mirthful jest.

He had ever a kindly touch
In his quips and tricks and mocks,
But playfully hinted much
Abhorred by the orthodox ;
Yet he trifled, when he should have
smote
With the sharp battle-axe of his
thought.

He was vain too—he was a poet—
You hardly could flatter enough ;
And you did not need to show it,
He could swallow the rankest stuff ;
Though he laughed at himself as he
did it,
Yet next time he did not forbid it.

He never was thorough or strong,
But fanciful only, and odd,
Never sure of the right and the wrong,
And he still would believe in a God,
And talked, with a vague kind of
beauty,
Of the soul, and its hope and its duty.

But that is the way with most men ;
 They dare not much more than to doubt ;
 They dare not, one man out of ten,
 To think their thought thoroughly out ;
 The practical plucks at their sleeve,
 And they're frightened to shock and
 to grieve.

I played on his foible awhile ;
 And made myself useful to him,
 Now giving a touch to his style,
 Now setting his papers in trim,
 Now glancing at nature to show it
 In lights that are new to the poet.

But he never could cast off the shapes
 Or shallow and silly romance—
 The frost-work that dims, as it drapes,
 Our window, and hides from our glance
 The beauty of truth, and the story
 Of life with its wonder and glory.

The poet will still be a child,
 And will curtain the sun to his
 slumbers ;

At the great chemic laws he half smiled,
 And laughed at the rhythm of its
 numbers,

And joked at the glass or the knife
 Detecting the secret of life.

Yet I liked him ; but Hilda grew
 jealous—

She cared not for verse or for rhyme,
 Except as the wind in the bellows,
 That brightened her hearth for the time ;
 Yet she would have the whole of his
 heart,
 And was touchy and sniffy and tart.

And one night he read us a ballad,
 As we sat the work-table around,
 Which his humour composed like a salad
 Of any green stuff that it found
 Cropping up on a fanciful soil,
 And he mixed it with wit as with oil.

I am sure that I have it somewhere,
 For I wrote it all down the next
 day :

Here it is ; and a sorry affair
 It is to have made such a fray :
 Yet 'twas like him, it must be confessed
 To make sentiment flower out of jest.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

The very Prince of Darkness
 Came once to Heaven's gate,
 Where Peter and the angels
 Talk together as they wait ;
 And he brought with him a spirit
 In a very dismal state.

Then Satan : " I'm in trouble,
 And come here to get advice ;
 I've been going up and down there
 Where you think we are not nice,
 And they will not have this fellow
 Among them at any price.

" I took him first to Lamech
 And the bloody race of Cain,
 But they rose in flat rebellion,
 That so mean a rogue should gain
 A place with gallant fellows
 Who in simple wrath had slain.

" Then I thought of those wild
 Herods
 With their burning diadem,
 And their spirits, ever haunted
 By the babes of Bethlehem :
 But they would not have the traitor
 Coming sneaking among them.

" After that I looked to Ahab,
 And the panther Jezebel ;
 But she sprang up like a fury,
 ' It were shame unspeakable
 To lodge a half-hanged felon
 Where a queen of men must dwell.'

"I'm afraid there's not a corner
Into which they'll let him in ;
The common rogues are furious
To confound them with his sin,
And my people are excited,
And the place is full of din."

Then Peter : "Traitor Judas,
Thou hearest what he says,
How the murderers and demons
Abhor thee and thy ways,
Thou betrayer of the Holy,
Who the Ancient is of Days."

Then Judas answered meekly :
"Yea, Peter, they are right ;
Cain and Lamech, Ahab, Herod,
They were godless men of might,
But not so vile as I am—
Oh they loathe me, and are right."

"Jezebel that slew the prophets,
Fawned not on the life she stole ;
Ahab only smote the servants,
Not the Lord who bare our dole ;
There should be a hell expressly
For my miserable soul."

"Let my name be named with
horror,
Let my place be wrapt in gloom,
Let me even be hell's lone outcast,
With a solitary doom—
I that kissed Him, and betrayed Him
To the cross, and to the tomb."

Then Satan : "There's the mischief,
He goes whining like a saint ;
I could keep my people quiet,
But he'd have them penitent.
It's as bad as if a parson
Made their very hearts grow faint."

But, as Peter looked on Judas,
Sunk in utter misery,
Lo ! there rose before his vision,

A grey morning by the sea,
And a weary, broken spirit
On the shores of Galilee.

"Oh, once, too, I despairèd,
For my Lord I had denied,
And once my heart was breaking,
For I cursed Him, and I lied ;
I did not slay myself, but yet
I wished that I had died."

"Leave thy burden with me, Satan,
He is not too bad for me ;
He will get 'his own place' duly,
And it is not mine to be
A breaker of the bruised,
Or the judge of such as he."

I praised it ; but she gazed to heaven
As if he had sinned the great sin
Which is not atoned or forgiven,
And no touch of pity can win,
And nobody knows what it is,
But her soul sat and trembled for his.

She said, "It was jesting with sin,
And nothing but grief came of that ;
Few may play with the devil, and win,
Whatever the game they are at ;
And Heaven was not surely a place
For one who despairèd of its grace."

I said, "It was quaint and bizarre,
And its humour was what I liked best ;
And I thought they were much on a par,
Who spoke, or in earnest or jest,
Of the souls of the bad or the just,
When their brains were a small pinch
of dust."

She fired up at that ; "Did I mean
That the soul was all one as the brain ?
Had I only a faith in the Seen,
With its animal pleasure and pain ?—
Had I left the old paths, that were trod
By the saints, and the true men of God."

I could not help smiling to see
Her look so bewildered and scared,
When her anger broke out upon me,
As if I had her husband ensnared
In some terrible plot to disown
All the gods that have ever been known.

"It was I made him mock and
blaspheme—
I who knew no more than the cat!
And her life had been bright as a dream
Till I came with the dusk like a bat;
For I hated the name of the Lord,
Whom every true woman adored.

"I was impious, false, and cruel;
I could sit at her fire and sing;
I would fain rob her life of the jewel
She prized above everything;
Yet all that she might have forgiven,
But I mocked at her God up in heaven."

Of course, he behaved like a man,
Tried to soothe her, and smooth
matters down,
And then, backing out of it, ran
Away to some job of his own;
But he got me persuaded to stay
When I should have at once gone away.

That was weak, I confess; but the place
Was nice, and his humour was
pleasant,
And there was such a light in his face,
Now and then, when his wife was
not present,
That—well, I remained for a time,
Enduring her moods and his rhyme.

But her temper got worse every day;
She feared me, and her I despised;
And he still let her have her own way,
Only soothed her, and meekly
advised;
So I left them, at last, in a trance
Of piety, love, and romance.

I hear that she blamed me because
I made myself useful to him;
But what could I do when she chose
To be distant and silent and prim!
In truth, she was never his mate,
Poor thing! she was only his Fate.

Of course, he was nothing to me;
He wanted a slave in his wife,
Who should worship him low on her
knee,
And serve with the breath of her life;
And there's nothing I ever abhorred
Like a man for my Master and Lord.

My Master is science divine,
My Lord is the truth that I seek,
My service is Freedom, and mine
Was ne'er the poor heart of the meek:
I would lean upon none, for I live
On that which great Nature can give.

Poor Hilda! I give her my pity,
And I pity her husband still more;
He will rhyme away life in a ditty,
She will make of her soul a heart-
sore;
Religion will quarrel in time
With Romance—and he'll put it in
rhyme:

And be comforted, too, as he reads
The tale of his sorrow and grief,
Binding up his poor heart while it
bleeds,
With the balm of a smooth-rhyming
leaf;
He will drop for his Hilda a tear,
And gloat o'er his verse for a year.

Now I think of it, somebody said,
That the crash had come some time ago;
She had either gone off, or was dead,
And a poem from that was to grow,
Which was certain to touch every heart
With its feeling of fine tragic Art.

If I had not that paper to write
On the dawning of mind in Molluscs,
And that other to set people right
On the subject of Molars and Tusks,
I think, I would like just to see
What he says about Hilda and me.

BOOK FOURTH

LUKE SPROTT, EVANGELIST

EVANGELIST and village smith, 'a man
of good report,
And cunning among cattle, known to
all the country near,
Luke could make the bellows snore,
and also painfully exhort,
And feared the Lord, and had a new
religion once a year.

He had been a Chartist leader in his
hot and hopeful youth,
Talking gunpowder and bayonets about
the rights of man,
Until he got converted, when he
preached about the Truth,
The Blood and the Atonement, the
Covenant and Plan.

Tired of his parish kirk, he tried the
Baptists for a season,
Tired of them, and turned a Methodist,
recanting all the past,
Tired again, and took to shady faiths
that shun the ways of reason;
And every change, he vowed, had
brought the peace of God at last.

And every change had left a stratum
of belief on him,
With fossils here of Presbytery, there
of his Baptist time,
Then traces of the Methodist, and
now the footprints dim
Of creatures that had sprawled across
the later mud and slime.

For partly Antinomian now, and partly
Manichee,
He blundered back to Church, and
deemed that he was orthodox,
And stormed at modern thinking as
the raging of the sea
That cast up mire and dirt upon the
everlasting rocks.

And yet his heart was right, although
his thought was so confused—
A tangled knot of broken thrums he
could not extricate;
All ordered thought of reason and
of science he abused,
But he was full of pity, and his love
was very great.

And because he was so earnest, and
because he spoke good words
Whose meaning none searched nicely,
and because he seemed to stir
Serious thoughts in careless hearts, as
if he touched their higher chords,
He was sought, and he was looked to
as a chosen minister.

A great broad-headed fellow, working
hard through all the week,
And thinking hard, the while he
worked, upon the fate of man,
He was fain to save the sinner and
the erring, and would speak
A word about the chaff and wheat,
and sifting with a fan.

There was a thick husk in his voice
that weirdly rose and fell,
As with a knotted fist he smote upon
a horny palm,
And poured his prophet-burden about
sin and death and hell,
Now like tender, pleading Gospel, now
like bitter cursing Psalm.

The man had power, for certain, for
he had a human heart,
Gleams of humour, tender touches,
too, of pathos, and throughout
A vein of clear sincerity whose might
is more than art,
And the firmness of a soul that had
not any wavering doubt.

And when he came about our house,
at first, I liked to hear
His pithy words, good-humoured if
you did not say him nay;
And stories of himself that were like
flotsam drifting near
From tempests of an unknown sea
whose storms were far away.

He had a keen shrewd humour, but it
mostly had to do
With the meaner part of nature, and
was blind to what is best;
He put his finger on a blot that
shamed and humbled you,
And thought he read you truest when
you showed unworthiest.

Though God was always in his mouth,
you did not feel the awe
Which hangs about the Presence when
he spoke of the Supreme;
He was more at home with Satan;
then he spake as if he saw;
But to me his speech of God was
like an echo, or a dream.

And yet I liked him, swinging with
long strides at gloaming late,
And stretching his vast limbs beside
the blazing winter fire,
With pale, lean face, and lanky hair,
and speech deliberate,
That never ceased to flood the house,
and never seemed to tire.

Not that it was good to hear him, for
it did not raise you higher;
It showed your baser self, but did not
rouse the better part;
He could search the hidden evil, but
he never could inspire
Unto any nobler life by his unveiling
of the heart.

Man was not lovely to him, nor yet
lovely was his God;
The cynic thought breeds mostly
bitter faith in things divine;
Who sees no beauty in the soul that
bears its human load
Shall see but little glory where the
gods of glory shine.

There was humour in his sayings,
though he meant them not for jest—
Too earnest he for mirth, except a
hard and bitter grin;
Yet his shrewdness had an oddness
being quaintly oft expressed,
And I laughed with laugh the keener
that I had to laugh within.

'Twas something fresh to me, to follow
slowly up and down
The windings of his tangled talk, and
make the thought complete;
I perused him like a volume whose
leaves, dog-eared and brown,
Held bits of the rough poetry that lies
about our feet.

There was a rude ideal which he
struggled to attain,
A poem floating in his mind, but
mangled by the lack
Of ordered thought to shape the hope,
the passion and the pain;
And he blundered into broken paths
to shun the beaten track.

What puzzled me about him was, to
 see him still so sure,
 So changeful, yet so certain that his
 way was always right;
 And that his vision was so dim,
 although his heart was pure,
 And that he could so grossly err, yet
 be a child of light.

I read his meaning partly, as one reads
 a palimpsest,
 Dimly traced upon the vellum under
 monkish hymns and prayers
 And trumpery tales of wonder; and I
 understood him best
 When I watched his human kindness
 taking up our human cares.

He fancied I was smitten with his
 views, when I was only
 Making him a curious study for the
 work I had to do,
 Just a theme for long reflection, as I
 sat in silence lonely,
 Shaping out the world around me in
 the poet's large review.

But I had no right to trifle with the
 follies of a friend,
 Or to play upon his humour to find
 matter for a book;
 I might have known that that would
 come to some unhappy end,
 For to toy with human hearts, is more
 than human hearts will brook.

'Tis the sin of art's fine passion that it
 only seeks to know,
 Not to perfect, any creature that his
 lot he may fulfil;
 It has charity to bear with any rankest
 weeds that grow
 Unto any picturesqueness, and to leave
 them growing still.

Priest and prophet try to save, and so
 their work is blessed; but mine
 strove only just to see, and reproduce
 the picture true,
 Making sacrifice of duty for the trim-
 ming of a line,
 Heeding not of higher wisdom in the
 itch for something new.

Oh my heart and its misgivings! I am
 never wholly sure.
 Was the art of Greece so perfect that
 its life was also high?
 Is the heavenly vision only seen what
 time the heart is pure?
 Is the poem but the poet as he dares
 to live and die?

Could I be a mere onlooker, and yet
 see what should be seen?
 Standing calmly on the outside, could
 I paint this life aright?
 Nay, that could never come to any
 perfect fruit, I ween,
 Could yield but sickly blossom nipt by
 any frosty night.

Better wield a pick or spade, or drive
 a furrow in the soil,
 Bear a hod, or hurl a barrow among
 fustian-wearing men,
 Win humblest daily bread by daily
 sweat of honest toil,
 Than live to find in life but stuff for
 scrawling with a pen!

One evening Luke, as usual, held
 discourse of human ills,
 And I turned me somewhat weary from
 his everlasting bleat,
 Monotonous, like sheep among the
 solitary hills,
 As he mooned away to Hilda sitting
 on the window seat.

Something, I know, had fretted me—
 I cannot now say what,
 Only living among dreams, and sitting
 far into the night,
 With none to bid good-speed unto the
 labour I was at,
 And a pained, though dumb suspicion
 that, perhaps, I did not right

To peril all the tender bliss of home
 for such an aim,
 Bred an irritable temper when I was
 not all alone,
 And so it fevered me to hear—though
 they were not to blame—
 Her weary stitching needle, and his
 weary preaching drone.

He had, somehow, raised the wonder
 that begets a woman's faith,
 The sense of power and mystery that
 awes her with belief;
 His God was not the Father that
 giveth life and breath,
 Yet she looked to him for guidance,
 and for comfort in her grief.

Women cling to any spirit that is
 confident and bold,
 Taking doubt to be a sin, the sign of
 an untrustful mind;
 And I was sure of nought; I saw the
 shadows round me fold,
 And felt that life was very dark, and
 I was very blind.

I was not fit to guide her, for myself I
 could not guide
 Through the valley of the shadow;
 only groping as I went,
 Step by step, and never certain of the
 shepherd at my side,
 And my soul was often troubled, and
 my heart was often faint.

But he was sure of all things in earth
 and hell and heaven,
 Sure that we were devil's children all,
 and heirs of wrath to come,
 Sure that on the bitter cross a sum of
 ransom had been given
 To purchase men from Satan, or at
 least to purchase some.

And this so certain dogmatism she
 took for faith divine,
 Infallible, intrenched within a wall of
 texts and creeds,
 And believed in him entirely, while
 she turned from words of mine
 As from henbane, hemlock, nightshade,
 or other deadly weeds.

That night he went on, ceaseless, in
 his hortatory tone
 Half-saying and half-singing, and I
 could not choose but hear
 Broken snatches of his doctrine, like
 the melancholy moan
 Of the wind that in the crannies sounds
 so dismal to the ear.

LUKE'S DISCOURSE

It is not our sins that send us there:
 There are sinners as bad in the
 heavenly choir,
 And souls as sweet as the summer air
 Up to their lips in the lake of fire.
 Stained with vices, as black as night,
 Some shall be found on the narrow
 way;
 For seen by the Lord from His holy
 height
 All your virtues are black as they.
 It is our unbelief slams the door,
 And rams in the bolt too, right in
 our face;
 But so much the more are our sins,
 the more
 Glory there is to abounding grace.

What, if one wronged you, meaning
it not?

What, if one hurt you just by a word?
No great credit to wipe that blot,
Or to forget what you need not have
heard.

But if I hate you, make you a liar,
Slay your dearest, and mock at his name,
Oh, the mercy that rises higher
The higher the sinner's guilt and blame!

Only believe in the Lamb they slew,
And in the blood that from Him
did flow;

Only believe that He died for you,
And it shall wash you as white as
the snow.

Oh, but the Blood is the life of Faith!
Even one drop would a world redeem.
Blood on the lintels, and ancient Death
Passed by the door like a hideous
dream;

Blood on his raiment made the Priest
Holy to stand where the Lord was
seen;

Blood on the altar wrath appeased;
Blood on the sinner, and he is clean.
Science and learning are but snares,
Reason and knowledge they are traps;
Better lie down with wolves and bears
Than with critical principles, books,
and maps.

Once I starved in the Hebrides,
Nearly a month, on whelks and clams,
And fishy birds from the grey salt
seas,

While I tried to think they were beeves
and lambs:

So is the soul that feeds on stuff
Reason gives it instead of bread;
So is the man who is swollen with fluff
Science is fain to put into his head.
These cannot take one sin away,
Bring no peace to the troubled heart;
As well down on your knees and pray
To the graven image of heathen art.

Children make-believe anything, whiles
They have got plenty to eat and drink,
Make a grand feast out of slates and tiles,
And water is wine if you only wink.

Oh how nicely they carve a stone!
Oh how pretty they drink the toast!
This is the shortbread, that the scone,
There are the platters of boiled and
roast!

But let the thirst and hunger come,
And give them for bread their slates
and stones,
And poor little hearts! all their prattle
is dumb,
And make-believe ends in tears and
moans.

So is the soul that plays with shams,
So till there comes an hour of need;
So shall it starve on whelks and clams
Of rational thought and virtuous deed.
But let him see the guilt and gloom,
But let him smell the burning lake,
And hear, as it were, the billows boom
Where is no shore for them to break.
Only the Blood then that atones,
Only the Blood can give him rest:
Hence with your make-believe slates
and stones,
He must have truth, for truth is best.

Hell and the devil (I thought the words
Came from his lips with a kind of
smack,
And round and rich, as the singing birds
Dwell on a choice note, and call it
back)—

Hell and the devil will have their due;
Oh, you may rush at a ditch or hedge,
And scramble through with a scratch
or two,

And a tattered skirt to the other ledge;
But there's no bottom to yonder pit,
There is no other side to hell,
There is no make-believe in it,
And there for ever the faithless dwell.

A terrible picture! aye, and whiles
 I have almost thought that it could
 not be,
 As I looked on the bay with its sunny
 smiles
 Glinting over the laughing sea.
 There the fishermen trim their boats,
 The wives at the door are baiting lines,
 Mirth of the children blithely floats
 Up from the beach as they touch the
 spines
 Of round sea-urchin under the dulse,
 Or hunt the crab in the shady pool,
 And the small waves beat like a
 tranquil pulse,
 And the seal comes out of the cavern
 cool,
 Bobbing his head above the sea,
 There where the white gulls dive and
 swim,
 And the swift ships pass like clouds
 that be
 Hung on the grey horizon dim.
 Then I have thought, till my heart
 grew faint,
 And my head swam with the vision dire:
 "O beautiful Earth, is it really meant
 Thou shalt be wrapped in the flam-
 ing fire?
 These happy homes where I oft have
 sat,
 These hands I have held in friendly
 grip,
 Those curly children I love to pat,
 Or to press their cheeks with a prayer-
 ful lip,
 Can they be fated—one of them even—
 Yet in the outer dark to lie,
 Far away hid from the glory of Heaven,
 And gnawed by the worm that cannot
 die?
 Oh, the anguish that thought has sent
 Thrilling all through my heart and
 brain!
 And Word and warning and argument
 The Spirit has pleaded with me in vain.

I thought it was righteous to rebel,
 I thought that it was for God I spoke,
 When I wrestled against the pains
 of hell,
 Like Jacob, until the morning broke.
 But who am I to reject His word
 That tells of the deathless worm
 and fire?
 And where were the mercy of the Lord
 If it plucked not brands from the
 burning pyre?

Here I broke in, You should have
 heard your heart, for it was true;
 I think it was the voice of God for
 pity pleading then,
 And you have crushed your pity with
 a text that deadened you,
 And texts are surely meant for quicken-
 ing nobler thoughts in men.

He took no notice of my speech; I
 wot not if he heard,
 Because there rose a gust of wind,
 shrill-whistling from the sea;
 But by and by there came a lull, and
 with the lull a word
 I was not meant to hear, though it was
 shrewdly meant for me.

Truly you tell me his faith is gone,
 Truly I see only doubting in him:
 He has buried the Christ, and sealed
 the stone,
 And watches all night 'mid the shadows
 dim,
 That none may quicken his soul again,
 That none may quicken his hope anew;
 And I have noted the sorrow and pain
 Of the great love that was wasting
 you,
 Lady, as slowly the cloud came down,
 Slowly and coldly the mist was creeping
 Over a soul that is dear as your own;
 And angels were watching with you and
 weeping.

Yea, I have grieved for him, and I have prayed Through the long night, as I watched afar, Sign of the poor part in life that he played, The lamp from his window that gleamed like a star ; There he is toiling, I said, for a bubble, Which when he touches it, shall be no more, Reaping the harvest of sorrow and trouble,— Here I will pray till his labour is o'er : Long as his lamp burns for folly of fame, So long shall mine that his soul I may win ; Shall he unwearying toil for a name, And I grow weary to save him from sin ? Thus have I stormed at the gates of heaven All the more that he laughed at me, Just that his soul might to me be given All the more we could never agree. I see that he mocks me, and flouts me, and jibes At all the things that I honour most, And seeks the lore of the clerks and scribes More than the seal of the Holy Ghost. He would put me into a book, I know, That wits might crackle their jests so droll, And laugh at the preaching smith whose blow Could smite the iron, and miss the soul. Yet I have loved him, oh so well ! Yet I have prayed for him, oh how long ! But he would risk all the terrors of hell For the point of a jest, or the rhyme of a song. Oh, he is just like a schoolboy that cares Only to hear his whip go crack In the dim streets, and the silent squares, While the echo comes ringing back ;	High in the heaven he would sit and brood, With a flickering smile on his dubious lip ; And down in hell would find some good In trying how loud he could crack his whip. You are wroth with me now, for the truth that I speak ; You would have me to smile, and beck, and cringe, And not let the gate of darkness creak, But smoothly work on its well-oiled hinge, And silently close on an erring soul, With just a snap when the deed is done ; And then I must whimper and condole, With a lying hope that the goal was won, Although he never had run the race, Never so much as made the start. But I cannot be sweet before your face, And false to you in my inmost heart. Tell me not of his love of truth, Kindly spirit, and thoughtful care, Or the pure love of his noble youth— Tell me of faith, if faith be there. Water the coals, and they will burn, Sun-dry the faggot, and it will flame ; So virtue or vice will serve your turn, And make you ready for wrath and shame. Faith alone is the master-key To the strait gate and the narrow road ; The others but skeleton picklocks be, And you never shall pick the locks of God. But hush ! His thunders are in the heaven, Rumbling low through the clouded sky, Like the roll of wheels that are swiftly driven With flames from the whirling tires that fly.
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Who knows? They are maybe sent
for him,

To clothe his spirit with awe and fear :
Close we the windows and sing a hymn,
And pray while the Lord is plainly
here.

Well to improve the solemn hour,
Well to smite while the bar is hot ;
Surely the Lord is great in power,
Woe to him that believeth not.

He had been speaking low to her, and
wist not I could hear ;

And though I heard I heeded not, my
thoughts were so intent

Watching the signs of coming storm
that darkled far and near,

And all his words fell off from me, like
arrows blunt and spent.

From every part of heaven the clouds
crept, slow, across the sky,

Black clouds, with lurid edges, and rifts
of leaden grey,

And earth lay still and breathless as
they mustered there on high,

Nor lark nor throstle noting the dimly
dying day.

Now, all was wrapt in darkness, without
twinkling of a star,

And the big thunder-rain came down in
sullen warning drops ;

Beneath the silent trees the silent kine
were grouped, and far

The sea moaned, and a shiver passed
along the tall tree-tops.

And then it burst in fury—rain and
hailstones mixed with fire,

And sudden gusts of wind that howled
across the stony moor,

With awful lulls, and shattering peals
that nearer grew and higher ;

And one great ball of hissing fire fell
almost at the door.

A wild, black night of tempest, such as
men remember long

In the dull undated life of a sleepy
country town,

When forests fell before the wind,
streams swept off bridges strong,

And church-towers, lightning-shiv-
ered, reeled, and then came crash-
ing down.

Awe - stricken, yet entranced, I
watched, with tremulous joy, each
phrase

And movement as it registered itself
upon the mind,

While the strained sense, exulting in
the wonder and amaze,

Jarred at a common sound amid the
thunder and the wind.

Thus when I heard his husky voice
'mid nature's grandest tones

Of so transcendent harmony, for
harmony was there

In all the roll of thunder, that awe-
thrilled my joints and bones,

It smote me like an insult—that
suggestion of a prayer.

I did not speak at first ; I did but grip
his bony wrist,

And whisper to be silent, and led him
to his seat,

Imperious in a wrath whose stern
resolve was only hissed

Into his ear ; and he was cowed, and
sat in silence meet.

Silent only for a little ; by and by
there came a lull,

And coughing, he spake something
about the wrath of heaven ;

Then I said, When God was preaching
other sermons sounded dull,

And I wanted no "improvement" of
the lesson He had given.

I said that, for myself, I did not wish to be improved, And doubted if he could at all improve the work of God ; But if he thought the wrath of heaven against himself was moved, He might pray there like a worm on whom his Deity had trod.	And God was good to me, I said, in gathering His cloud, I saw a special providence in letting loose the wind ; That He cared to feed the hungry every pious heart allowed, But He must doubly care to feed the hunger of the mind.
I added that the tempest was a mercy clear to me, The very thing I needed for the volume that I wrote ; It came in time precisely, and my book was sure to be A great success, with such a glorious picture in the plot.	The more he stared and gasped at me, the more I pushed him hard ; Saying, Surely the book-harvest was heaven's peculiar care ; The Church might be God's vineyard, but the verses of the bard Were the ripe fruits of His orchard, and the flowers that made it fair ;
I had just come to a point where I required a thunderstorm, And heaven was kind to send it in the very nick of time ; And I was very grateful not to be a trampled worm, But a favourite of the gods who gave me matter for my rhyme.	And novels were the poppies, red and sunny in the field, And histories were wholesome oats, and essays were the rich Clover-fields that fed His kine, and made the butter that they yield, While sermons were the small weeds growing in the hedge or ditch ;
If the Father cares for sparrows, He may surely care for books, And send a troubled author storm or sunshine which he needs ; If winds were sent to farmers for the winnowing of their stooks, Surely poets might get weather for recording of His deeds.	And tracts were for his horses, like the vetches and the tares To be munched up by the bushel, being savourless and dry ; But songs were his ripe apples ; and his apricots and pears Were ballads and the lyric strains of love, that never die.
And why should men be grateful for a fine potato crop, Or sunshine for the oats, or rain to make the turnips grow, And thankless for the wholesome books that fruitful authors drop For a publisher's good season up in Paternoster Row.	I wot not why I chattered so amid the sullen lull, While the tempest took its breath, and gathered for another burst ; It was his face that tempted me, it looked so blank and dull ; And partly I revenged me for his talk with Hilda, first.

Because he was a preacher, she had let
him say to her
What no one else had dared to say
without her proud rebuke ;
But any thing that called itself a
Christian minister
She heard as she would hearken to the
Volume of the Book.

Low in my heart I laughed then to
see him stare and gasp
At that imagined book for which the
thunder had been sent,
And at his puzzled horror as I buzzed
like stinging wasp,
Too swift for his slow movements, in
my wanton merriment.

No book then was I writing that needed
storm or calm,
Nor could I copy Nature in that hard
and soulless way,
Barely cataloguing facts, although I
heard, as 'twere a Psalm
Of awe-inspiring joy, the grand
orchestral thunder play.

And truth may lie in laughter too, and
wisdom in a jest,
And wit may lend its sparkle to the
reverential thought ;
And solemn fools shall talk to you
their wisest and their best,
And leave you very weary with the
nothing you have got.

At length he rose in anger, would not
stay beneath a roof
That might be smote with judgment
for the blasphemies I said :
Would I jest at the Eternal, while His
thunders rolled aloof,
And His awful sword was flashing in
the lightning overhead ?

The world was blind and faithless,
and full of vain conceit
Of wisdom which was foolishness, and
would not know the Lord ;
And I might write brisk words that,
one day, I would fain delete
When He came in His glory, whom the
Universe adored.

I did not bid him stay, although the
storm burst forth anew,
And snapt a grand old pine as if it had
been but a reed ;
There were five behind our cottage,
and I loved them, and I knew
Their features and their voices, for
they spoke to me, indeed.

They were like living things to me,
with thoughts and memories
And passions of the women in the
untamed Druid times ;
I heard them sing their skalds at night
unto the raving seas,
And moan their rugged lyke-wakes in
the ancient Runic rhymes.

I called them Druid sisters, for I wist
that they had seen
The black priests in the forest, and the
altars, and the smoke ;
And in the evening still they talked to
me of what had been
Ere the Roman smote the savage, or
the Christian morning broke.

Now, startled by the sudden crash, I
did not think of him,
But of the tall grey sister who was
growing bald atop,
And grey with clinging lichen that
had feathered every limb,
And in my mind I saw her bow her
lofty head, and drop,

While o'er their fallen sister all the
others scream and moan
In unrestrained anguish; so I did not
bid him stay;
The night was wild and fearful, and
the road was dark and lone,
But he had the wild-beast instinct to
surely find his way.

And so I let him go, and then I
thought that I did right;
Could any soul have sat there to be
drenched with commonplace,
Slushed with dull ditch-water preach-
ments, when the awe of that great
night
Had strung the mind to highest pitch,
and touched the heart with grace?

My being was at white heat, and he
would have plunged it so,
Hissing, into his cold water; and I
did rebel at that;
And there are times when silence, if
the preacher did but know,
Shall preach to better purpose than a
sermon stale and flat.

Thus he went forth in wrath, and I
had no regretful thought
Hearing him bang the door, and stride
into the stormy night;
I sat in silence, ordering all the pictures
I had got,
Or glancing now at Hilda through the
glimmering candle-light.

By and by, the storm abated, and the
moon came forth, at length,
In a clear breadth of heaven, with all
the countless host of stars,
And nature did assert the calm tran-
quillity of strength,
And bridled with the Pleiades the
wrath of angry Mars.

I looked out from my window to
Orion and his belt;
She looked out from her window to
the lone star near the Pole;
And not a word we spake as yet, but
in my heart I felt
A shadow creeping coldly, like
eclipse, across my soul.

There she sat, pale and anxious, with
a wistful frightened look
That seemed to shrink from me, al-
though she neither spoke nor stirred;
There I sat, dull and listless, with my
eyes upon a book
Whereof, although I read and read, I
knew not e'er a word.

Very silent were we both; but how I
yearned for her I loved!
As gazing through the candle-light, I
saw her quivering lip,
And how the great tears gathered,
and how the loose ring moved,
Unconscious, from the knuckle to the
slender finger-tip.

I thought I had done right; but I
was not so sure next day;—
Morning thoughts are sweet and
tender—and I whispered my regret;
I had been vexed and angry; and I
might have bid him stay;
But hinted that his head would be the
cooler for the wet.

Ah me! ah me! that thoughtless itch
for saying clever things!
Ah me! ah me! that little sense of
what a word may do!
Ah me! the woeful echo from the
weary past that rings
Words that are very old now, but the
grief is always new!

That day was full of rumours sad, of
boats swamped out at sea,
Guns booming in the offing, and
wrecks strewn along the shore,
And the fierce-rushing river had
flooded all the lea,
And left but stones and gravel where
the clover grew before.

Weary and sad, at evening I hasted
home, with all
My budget of ill news, to find yet
worse awaiting there,
For Hilda, with a face that did my
very heart appal,
Sat, white and chill, beside the fire,
with fixed and stony stare.

A fixed and stony stare at me! I
think she knew me not,
But shivered when I spoke, and
seemed to shrink from me in dread;
And but for that long shudder my
unwelcome presence brought,
I hardly could have known if she were
living then or dead.

O misery! to think the only sign of
life should be
A chill and shrinking quiver at the
tender words I spake!
What was it? what had done it? who
will tell the truth to me?
And now I thought my head would
reel, and now my heart would break.

But bit by bit, I gathered that she had
gone out at noon
To walk across the moor, and see the
shepherd's sickly wife,
And nurse her sickly babe a while,
and sing a quiet tune
To still its ceaseless wailing, for it had
faint hold of life.

And what she saw, or what she heard,
or what had touched her wits,
Our handmaid wist not — only, she
came home so ghastly pale,
And spoke not any word to her, but
fell in swooning fits,
And then sat with a stony look, or
wailed a piteous wail.

Just then I heard a trampling and a
shuffling at the door,
And men came in thereafter with
heavy, clumsy tread,
And laid a wet, lank burden there
beside me on the floor,
And every face that looked at me was
ghastly as the dead.

They had been going home, and
turned to look at the old pine
Thunder-blasted in the tempest, when
they saw him lying there;
Poor Luke! he was a godly man, and
eloquent divine,
And also shod the horses well, and
acted just and fair!

So clumsily they told the tale, low-
speaking, sad at heart,
Losing a faithful friend in days of
weary grief and care;
And now the truth flashed on me as I
looked, and saw a part
Of his hard features through the fell of
moist and matted hair.

Scarce had he left my door, or but a
score of paces gone,
That evening, when a sudden fate had
laid him with the tree,
And Hilda, coming home, had seen
the dead man lying lone
Among the pools of water, with re-
proach of her and me.

And that had driven her from her wits,
and now she sat and stared,
And shivered when I spake to her, and
was distraught and wild;
And as I held her hand, and prayed,
I vowed, too, that I shared
Her sorrow and her faith and hope,
and would be as a child.

Yea, I would be a child of God, if she
would only look,
I would believe whate'er she said, if
she would only speak,
I would not care for fame or power,
for glory or for book,
If she would only kiss me with the
kiss that I did seek.

A weary, woeful night it was, un-
broken night to her,
Through all the dismal hours, and oh
the anguish unto me !
But with the morning light, the day
began to faintly stir
With faint gleams of returning thought
as lights upon the sea.

But from that day we were estranged :
she spoke no word of blame,
Or only blamed herself, but she was
silent and apart ;
We never spake about him, and we
never named his name,
But yet his shadow coldly lay between
me and her heart.

It was as if my fate had been to drive
her God away,
To part her from all emblems and
helps of things Divine ;
And she must walk without me now
along the narrow way,
And she must make atonement for the
guilt that had been mine.

BOOK FIFTH

REV. ELPHINSTONE BELL,
PRIEST

"YEA, the world is very evil, full of
vanity and lies,
But the Lord is very patient, and the
Church is great in might,
With her orders, her traditions, and
her sacred mysteries
She can cleanse your sins away, and
turn the darkness into light.

"She only has the seal of Power—the
apostle's grand device,
Handed down through all the ages in
a long unbroken line,
The glorious right to minister the
bloodless sacrifice,
And offer it for you in sacramental
bread and wine.

"Only her Priests may wear the robes
befitting that great act
When bread and wine become the body
and blood of God's true Son,
Only her prayers avail to realise the
awful fact
And put into your mouths the life that
by His death was won.

"What can your sects do for you?
they may bring the child to birth,
But the child is never born, and the
mother's breasts are dry ;
So you pine away and perish, for their
prayers are little worth
Without the priestly unction, and the
grace that comes thereby.

"You build an ugly barn, which you
call a Kirk, and then
One preaches in Geneva gown to men
predestinate,

This to go down into the pit with all
his virtues fair,
And *that* with all his sins to pass to
heaven with heart elate.

“And this you call the grace of God,
electing whom He will,
And passing by the others in His
absolute decree,
And the ransomed sing the praises of
that grace inscrutable,
And your angels tune their harps to
laud that monstrous sovereignty.

“Little help such teaching brings to him
that wrestles with the lies,
The rogueries and vices that tarnish
all our days;
Therefore do we lift the banner of the
Church that loudly cries
To repentance of your errors, and the
cleansing of your ways.”

So preached the Preacher to us once;
an Oxford scholar, young,
With bare, thin face and sallow, bare
and shallow too his mind;
A narrow spirit, with a pulpit rhetoric
high-strung,
Something stale and commonplace, but
very telling of its kind.

Rounded periods, rarely natural—fit
movements of the hand—
Tones liquid, but monotonous—
ejaculations oft
To emphasise a commonplace—a
manner gravely bland
In private, but with women very
winning, gracious, soft;

These had won the hearts of many,
gathered crowds into his pews,
Though he had little light to give, and
none at all to me;

And weekly in the Kirk the pulpit
thundered at his views,
And at all who to the Woman, or the
Beast might bow the knee.

A pretty Church-revival now sprang
up, with dainty hymns
Artistically sung, and prayers with
high intoning read,
And holly-wreaths at Christmas about
the cherubims
That smiled with puffy cheeks beside
the tablets of the dead.

There were candles on the altar, there
was incense in the air,
A reredos, and a crucifix that towered
up like a mast;
And with forty minutes' singing, and
forty minutes' prayer,
And fifteen minutes' preaching, we
were coming right at last.

Then he needed a new organ, and we
had a grand bazaar,
And raffles winning money as you
might at whist or pool;
And a lady-volunteer who carried on
a pretty war
With a choir of surpliced children,
badly trained at Sunday school.

'Twas not the simple worship of our
homely Presbyters,
Nor yet the stately worship of the
custom Catholic,
But a modern imitation, smacking of
the milliner's;
Brand-new devotions fashioned on the
model of antique.

To me it felt all hollow; but yet the
youth had zeal,
Played pastor very diligent, had he
had aught to say,

Spent days among the sick, and by the
fevered bed would kneel,
And patter o'er his little book, and
hurry on his way.

Hilda took to him amazingly, went to
his daily prayers
And school and district work, and
now was rarely found at home ;
Quoted his tinsel pretty words, was
full of church affairs,
And when I jested at him was as crisp
to me as foam.

Day by day the church she haunted,
quite forsook her parish kirk,
Took to wearing dingy dresses, russet-
brown or iron-grey,
Fasted often, made her life a weary
penitential work,
With all its natural brightness now put
carefully away.

Scarce an hour but had its service of
reading or of prayer,
Scarce a day but was a saint's day,
and her saints were very grim ;
They frowned at every pleasure, and
they smiled at every care,
And still she spoke to me of God, and
giving all for Him.

Keenly I felt that, all the more the
priestling was obeyed,
The lonelier life was growing, and we
drifted more apart ;
We had not any words, but something
on her spirit preyed,
And ever-widening waters seemed to
sunder heart from heart.

He led her on a way divine which
was not human too,
And that, I wist, was not the way
that Christ had walked of old ;

And common, homely duty now a
daily burden grew,
And common life was trifling, and all
earthly love was cold.

What was it? People told me he
was verging toward Rome ;
But Roman or Genevan, mattered
little unto me ;
God had His little children out at nurse
in many a home,
Who laid their Bible on His lap, or
Cross upon His knee

That could never work this mischief ;
all the churches had their popes ;
And I cared not for Pope Calvin more
than Pius ; as for beads
And crucifix and censers and chasubles
and copes,
If she had a fancy for them, they were
prettier things than creeds.

What was it, then, that chilled her
into frosty silence now,
As days went dimly by, without the
wintriest gleam of mirth
To brighten up her wistful look, or
clear the clouded brow?
And wherefore did she sigh like one
a-weary of the earth ?

For all the house grew silent, and her
laugh was never heard,
That wont to ring so cheery, and she
sang but doleful hymns
About the pilgrim's travail, and the
comfort of His Word,
And the home that is eternal, and the
shining seraphims.

I comprehend now better what it was
that preyed on her
As she brooded in her loneliness, and
yearned for higher love ;

For her heart went upward, dreaming
of that little visitor
Whom God had taken from her arms
into the heaven above.

She thought we were not worthy to
rear the child of God,
Our home-air was too worldly for so
pure a soul to breathe,
And while she meekly bowed beneath
the chastening of the rod,
About the rod of sorrow she would
twine a holy wreath.

Ever her heart was longing for the life
that is not here,
And love that death can never touch
with withering of its bloom,
And for the tender blossom that she
laid with awe and fear,
Yet with absolute assurance, in its
little grassy tomb.

Upward her daily musings soared in
wonder, hope, and awe,
The heavenward meditations of a heart
that found no rest,
Save in thought-reflected vision of the
glory where she saw
The children with the Father folded
in among the blest.

All this I learnt long after, when I
read the secret Book
Of her solitary musing, blurred with
many a tearful stain;
I had thought her cold unto me when
I saw her absent look,
But her soul was longing for the lost
that cometh not again.

I also found the priest upon her tender
scruples played,
Eager to make a saint now of the
mediæval kind,

Inventing fresh atonements, as the
restless heart betrayed
Their failure in the cravings of the
still remorseful mind.

She was daily in his thoughts, and she
was ever in his prayers;
He watched her sickly thought with
pride, and nursed the deep disease:
Oh the honour to his work, the rich
reward of all his cares,
To have the training of a saint in evil
days like these!

But this I knew not at the time; and
as I cast about
For any likely reason this new sorrow
to explain,
And could not find it in my work, nor
in my deepening doubt,
There sprang up in my brooding heart
a thought of bitter pain.

For calling up the former days which
happily had flown,
I paused at Winnie Urquhart, with
her talent and conceit;
Hilda was jealous at the time, I saw
it in her frown,
And heard it in the tapping, on the
carpet, of her feet.

Was this the shadow on our life? and
could her love expire
In fumes of jealous anger, and in self-
tormenting thought?
Had she so little faith in me, and in
the altar-fire
Which I had tended like a charge that
from the heavens I got?

My heart had never wandered for a
moment from its place;
My faith had been unshaken, and un-
shadowed for an hour;

But now a chill crept o'er my soul, a
gloom came on my face,
And my distrusted love became a deep
distrustful power.

And thus the strangeness grew — a
silent gulf between us twain,
A wan, still water, drifting us yet more
and more apart :
A life of wrested meanings, and of
keen mistaken pain,
While each, with wistful longing,
wondered at the other's heart.

Yet once I tried to draw her close
again, for love is strong,
And oh my love yearned for her love,
and oh my heart was sore !
But cold love is slow to warm again ;
and now the nights were long,
Like a stretch of barren sand upon the
day's unhappy shore.

But one bright summer evening—all
the sadder for its brightness—
I sat in the green arbour looking to the
sleepy town ;
Slumbrous-sweet syringa-blossomhung
about me in their whiteness,
And the summer in its glory bore the
burden of its crown.

Sat the coney on its haunches 'mong
the grey sand near its hole,
Crouched the hare in the long furrow
where the tenderest barley grew,
And I bade the living creatures loving
welcome in my soul,
For life was not so lonely with them
frisking in my view.

A yellow bee was drumming in the
foxglove, where it showed
A spire of purple-spotted bells upon
the sunny brae,

And my heart went back a-dreaming
far along the changeful road,
Till thought passed into tears, and all
the scene grew dim and grey.

Oh, sad our withered hopes amid the
flush of leaf and flower ;
Sad the winter of the spirit with the
summer's wealth around ;
And the weird feeling came again upon
me in that hour,
That life was but a shadow flitting
dimly on the ground.

Shadowy joys, and shadowy sorrows !
shadows all I felt and saw !
The old sense of unreality came back
on me again ;
I had dreamt, and I was waking, and
the morning air was raw,
Or perhaps I only dreamt that I was
waking up to pain.

There was a fate upon me, and it drove
me on and on,
And I must "dree my weird," alas,
whatever it might be ;
Yet was I but a shadow among shadows
sitting lone,
And waiting for the doom that moaned
around me like the sea.

Then Hilda came up softly, and softly
sat her down ;
I knew that she was very pale, and
very often sighed,
Although I looked away from her unto
the sleepy town
Expecting that sure fate which from
afar I had descried.

'Twas all as if I knew before the
thing that was to be ;
'Twould not have startled me to hear
that I must die that night !

Yet 'twas as if a shadow of no moment unto me, A fate and yet a dream—and very strange, yet very right.	And there was that Greek-feeling of the coming on of Fate, Which dulled me with its shadow like the gloom of an eclipse.
In silence and constraint we sat, a short while, side by side, While leaf by leaf she plucked the flower in pieces at her waist With thin and trembling hand; and with mechanic foot I traced Senseless scores upon the gravel, to be speedily effaced.	And under all there lay the petulant, brooding sense of wrong, That her jealous love distrusted mine, that trusted once for all, And had been true to her as is the music to the song That subtly links its movement unto every rise and fall.
“I would do right,” she said, “and yet I know not what to think, For things are not the same now as they used to be before; And from the cross appointed us we may not dare to shrink, Nor close the ear to Him who standeth knocking at the door.”	Then, something seemed to break in me. I thought I heard it snap, Like string of lute or viol, and I did not seem to care; There was no more to win or lose; my life had lost its sap, And shook but leafless branches creak- ing in the wintry air.
I knew this was her woman's way of drawing near to me, A hint that, like a bud, a little sunshine would unfold,— A feeling out for any touch of answer- ing sympathy, That all the burdened secret of her trouble might be told.	I scarce know what I answered, but it had no touch of grace;— 'Twas something about making crosses where no cross was meant; The anguish and the deadness drove me into commonplace, And the commonplace fell on her like a heartless argument.
And oh I should have let my heart flow freely out to hers, I should have met her longing, and mingled it with mine, I should have wooed her o'er again, pleading with all that stirs The woman and the human, till she felt it was divine.	And still I see the great blue eyes, strange-gleaming like a ghost, From out of her pale face, as she made answer with a moan; “At least, I shall not have to pay the price I dreaded most; God's love will break no human heart, unless it break my own.”
But I was never ready yet, was always wise too late; Right words come swiftly to my pen, but slowly to my lips;	She had brought to me her burden, and she brought it all in vain; O cursed conceit of being right which kills all noble feeling!

A little word of kindness would have saved a load of pain, A little word of love had wrought a miracle of healing.	She, hoping not for motherhood, had tidied all she had, And writ out full directions for the time of her release.
She meant to tell me all her grief, and all her young heart's care, And all the fond atonements she was minded then to try ; She meant to seek my counsel for the purpose that she bare On a scrupulous, troubled conscience that was sorely vexed thereby.	They say, the strange new life that throbs beneath a mother's heart Feels often liker death ; I cannot tell ; but when I came By chance, then, on the sorted drawers, and understood, in part, Their meaning, oh the anguish, and the fear, and sense of blame !
And I,—I had not heard her ; but with blankest commonplace Had turned away from eager eyes that pleaded as for life, Had spoken in tones of iron, with an unmoved iron face, And every word a cruel stab as with a cruel knife.	And now again she hung above her boxes all the day, And went about the house, too, with a look premeditate, Silent, counting all the linens, putting things in drawers away, And by the less disorder making home more desolate.
Now both again were silent ; then she sighed, and went away, And by and by I rose, and passed down to the moaning sea, Until the moon arose, and spread long tresses on the bay, And silent stars, with sad rebuke, seemed looking down on me.	Books were gathered from the tables, and shelved in order due, Things that crowded on the mantel- piece were laid aside in drawers, Familiar old disorder now took shape as neat and new, And there was bundling of receipts, and labelling of jars.
Next day, I watched her going, calm, about her household work, Putting everything in order, sorting all with bated breath, Desk and drawer, and banded letter ; and her face was like a mask, While she put all in its place, as one prepares for coming death.	She wrote out for our maid some thoughtful counsel for the days When I should be alone, and where to find what I might need, And what my special likings were, and what my common ways, And ended with a prayer that Heaven might bless her in her deed.
I could not but remember how, when that hope made us glad, Which ended in a little grave in the dim land of peace,	I knew not this till after ; and I could not then divine The meaning of the order, and the look of rooms to let,

The packed and sorted linens, neatly
marked with numbers fine,
And careful noting of accounts, and
clearing of her debts.

Only the days went by, as haunted by
a coming Fate,
That well I knew was closing on me,
like the darkling night,
Till reaching home one evening, I
found no loving mate
Fluttering around our little nest amid
the waning light.

Instead, there was a letter on the
mantelpiece, that leant
Against the marble clock—a blotted
letter, sealed with black;
I did not need to read it then, to find
out what it meant,
As I saw the tremulous letters, faintly
scrawled upon the back.

And yet it stunned me for a while; I
held it in my hand,
Staring at the superscription, though I
wist not what I saw;
I know I locked the door too; for
my sorrow could not stand
The gaze of the scared housemaid,
half in pity, half in awe.

Alone! my soul would be alone! it
was a lonely lot
That henceforth must be mine; but
now I wanted solitude;
Like wounded deer that leaves the
herd for some secluded spot
To die in, so I shut me in, and felt
that it was good.

I broke the seal, and read I knew not
what, but all the night
I paced in silent anguish up and down
the silent room,

Now longing that the darkness might
never see the light,
Now praying for the light to scare the
horror of the gloom.

I have it now, that letter—it is brown
and tattered now,
Often read, although its every word is
burnt into my brain;
And well where every falling tear had
blotted it I know,
And every blot is in my heart a scar
and aching pain.

THE LETTER

Husband and Dearest, be not wroth
with me,
Because I leave you for a little while—
Only a little—one day to return,
A better wife, and make a brighter
home,
For therefore do I go, with breaking
heart;
And secretly, for it would break your
heart
To let me go; and yet I needs must
go,
That worse may not befall, and we,
the more
We rub together, be but more
estranged.

Often I thought to tell you all the
thought
That brooded in me. But you did
not care
To speak of what might grow into
debate;
And I was fearful, knowing you have
much
Upon your mind, and that it is not well
To fret the current of your larger
thought
With small obstructions. What I
mean is this:

Indeed, I did not mean to hide from
you
My purpose, or to purpose anything
Unworthy; for wherever I may be,
My wifely heart goes with me, and
the troth
I vowed to you; and that you know
right well.

But things are no more as they were
with us;

Somehow the light has gone out from
our life,

And we, together living, live apart
In joyless solitude. I blame you not,
Except that your too tender cherishing
Fostered my self-love, making much
of me,

Petting myself, and pitying myself
Too much already. Mine alone the
blame

Of that dim separateness. For I
was not

The wife you needed, though I tried
to be,

And never woman's love was more
than mine.

I have not shared the burden of your
thoughts,

I have not understood you, nor forgot
Myself in your high purpose; my
small lamp

That feebly glimmered, failed, of
course, to light

The two large chambers of your life.
Perhaps,

I never should have been a wedded
wife;

Perhaps it had been better had I
died,

When God took baby from us. I
have been

Foolish and fretful, selfish, useless;
only

I loved so absolute — that is my
excuse.

Had I but loved my God as well!
But there,

'The more I strove that you should
cleave to Him,

The more I seemed to lose my hold
of Him,

And drifted as you drifted, helping not
Your soul, and hurting mine own faith,
as day

Slipt after day, with ever dimmer sense
Of things unseen in me, and harder
thoughts

In you, until I felt my darkening way
Was darkening yours, and dropping
into death,

As we more alien grew in all our
thoughts,

In feeling more estranged, in ways
more sundered,

And God appeared the farther from
us both.

That is the bitter end of all my
striving—

Harm to my own soul, cruel hurt to
thine!

And yet I meant so well; only I tried
A work beyond my power; except
the Lord,

Do build the house, the builder builds
in vain.

Bear with me; I am full of self-
reproach,

As well I may be, and I must atone
For that so fruitless past, ere peace
will come.

I have shunned sorrow, comforting
myself

Till I have lost all comfort in myself;
And now I must seek sorrow for
a while,

And wear the crown of thorns, and
bear the cross.

And find a new life in them. Do
not try

To hinder that on which my heart is set,

Which will redeem my life from
 shallowness,
 And make its homely service, by
 and by,
 Truer and purer; both to thee more
 helpful,
 And happier to myself, forgetting self.
 A little while, and then I shall come
 back,
 Wiser by lessons gathered where the
 shades
 Of the Eternal fold around man's life,
 Saying, Be still, and know that I
 am God.
 A little while—and but a little while,
 Not long enough for either to forget,
 Yet long enough for you to look
 beyond,
 And find the fountain of a surer peace
 Than ever I could give. A little while,
 And we shall wed again, and make
 a home,
 Where Christ will dwell with us, as
 we recall
 This break of our young marriage.
 Farewell, now;
 'Tis hard to write, and could not
 have been spoken;
 And yet it must be: farewell, my
 beloved.
 I have gone over all the house, and left
 Some tears in every room, and take
 with me
 Its picture in my heart. I think
 that all
 Is left in order; if there's aught
 forgotten,
 Forgive me, for my heart was very
 heavy.
 I know you'll not forget to plant fresh
 flowers
 Around the little grave. 'Tis noth-
 ing; yet,
 When I return I would not like to see
 Another picture than I bear with me.

You cannot doubt the love I bear to you,
 You cannot doubt the grief that weeps
 for you,
 You cannot doubt the purpose that
 for you
 Would school my heart by earnest
 discipline;
 You cannot doubt me, even in leaving you
 A little while, and but a little while,
 For surely God will spare me unto you.
 As I read that blotted letter, with
 its love so fond and true,
 Again in the dim morning, I was
 stung with new regret;
 Why had I mooned away the night,
 when there was that to do
 Which still might heal our sorrow,
 and restore my darling yet?
 O misery! O misery! to have been
 rich indeed,
 And to have wasted all that wealth
 of love by cold distrust!
 And what were I without her, but a
 shivering, withered reed
 With the glad water at its roots all
 gone to summer dust?
 I did not wish a wiser wife—I only
 wanted her?
 How could she think I cared for
 bookish women or their praise?
 If she only saw my heart, and if she
 only felt the stir
 Of pain and shame and self-contempt
 I had for all my ways!
 I hurried to our priestling; I was
 sure he had to do
 With this fresh sorrow of my life; and
 I misjudged him not;
 He was fain to make atonement
 where atonement was not due,
 And manufactured crosses when
 Providence forgot.

I found him high and haughty in a
saintly kind of way,
But he allowed that she had joined a
pious sisterhood
Who from a distant harbour would
be sailing on that day,
To nurse the wounded in the war, and
do the dying good.

I waited not for more ; 'twas idle to
dispute with him :
He had the true ascetic heart that
knows no tie, or care
Of wife or child or kindred, and was
fain to sing a hymn
For "those in peril on the sea," when
I was fain to swear.

O that journey to the seaport ! O the
thoughts that surged on me !
O the reasons I would urge ! the
triumph I must surely win !—
But the anchor had been weighed,
the ship was dropping out to sea,
And I only looked on crowded decks,
and heard confused din.

I saw the ship sway o'er the bar, I
saw the hurrying crowd,
And the sailors sang light-hearted,
and the landsmen gave a shout ;
But song and shout were in my ear
lamentings low or loud,
And whether all were truth or dream,
I could not well make out.

I rushed along the granite mole that
stretched far out to sea,
Where angry waves were howling
loud, like hungry beasts of prey ;
O cruel waves whose crashing drowned
the cry that came from me !
O mocking waves that heeded not,
but bore my love away.

The rain came down in plashes,
gusty, sputtering in my face,
And little, gushing runlets flowed
down by me to the sea ;
I felt their chill, but recked not, and
shivering for a space
Sat on the dripping stones, and leant
my face upon my knee.

What followed then I cannot tell,
I cannot tell how long—
Sounds that made my blood to tingle,
laughter mingled with long sighs ;
And now I was athirst, and now was
choking in a throng,
And ever one pale visage looked on
me with yearning eyes.

O God forgive us, Hilda ; and God
be good to thee !
O my cold, distrustful silence, it was
not the better part !
And oh what would I give to bring
my love back from the sea
Whose billows, ever breaking on me,
break my very heart.

Where art thou ? Where, my darling ?
the noise of war is stilled,
The wounded sun them at the doors,
or cripple through the street ;
I ask them of my darling, and they
tell me who were killed,
Of the soldiers in the trenches, or the
sailors in the fleet.

They tell me of the sisters, but they
never speak of her ;
There was a Sister Bridget, whom
they never name without
Rubbing a sleeve across the eye, and
talking of the stir,
When they broke out of the trenches
to assail the great Redoubt.

I wait and ask, and wait in vain ; she
 passed away from me ;
 The last glimpse that I had was
 when the ship swayed o'er the bar ;
 And all the hope of love went down
 into the stormy sea,
 And never tidings came from it, or
 from the storm of war.

EPILOGUE

A MIGHTY city of tented streets,
 And never a house of brick or stone,
 And the pulse of the city throbs and
 beats
 As if in a fever burning on ;
 Nothing but tents in all the plain,
 Nothing but bronzed and bearded men,
 With clashing sabre and jingling spur,
 Plume of feather, or crest of fur.

Here are banners, and there are flags ;
 All of their bravery now is stained ;
 As the wind flutters their tattered rags,
 Lo ! where the powder and blood are
 grained :
 And the heavy air has a foetid breath :
 Is it of blood ? or is it of death ?
 How the wild dogs and the birds
 are fat,
 Gorged where they lazily perch or
 squat !

Now, at a tent-door steeds are
 champing,
 Now they are galloping forth with
 speed ;
 Down the long streets there are com-
 panies tramping,
 Grimly silent, on some fell deed ;
 Some in the wine-shop are drinking
 hard,
 Some are gaming with dice and card ;
 Many a jolly stave trowls from those,
 But these are coming to oaths and
 blows.

Hark ! to the call of the bugle horn,
 Or the quick rattle of mustering drum !
 Swift to the summons, at even or morn,
 Bronzed and bearded, the gallants
 come.
 Balls from the rifle-pits *ping* about,
 Great guns boom from the big Re-
 doubt,
 And the angry hiss of the burning shell
 Screams through the fire and smoke
 of hell.

Far on the outskirts stands a tent,
 And over the tent a great red Cross ;
 Balls lie round, but their force was
 spent
 Long ere they rolled o'er the silent
 moss ;
 A cross is over the silent gate,
 A cross on the arm of them that wait,
 Emblem of pity and healing and peace,
 Bidding the wrath of war here to cease.

One comes out of it, grave and sad ;
 Just a whisper, and then returns ;
 What are the tidings now ? good or
 bad ?
 Still she lives, but the fever burns.
 Then again silence reigns all about,
 And the twilight pales, and a star
 comes out,
 But yet the air seems to pulse and to
 throb,
 Now and again, with a stifled sob.

Sudden, the sob is turned to a wail ;
 What is it ? where is it ? Hush ! the
 door
 Opens again now, and all hearts fail ;—
 He too is weeping, for all is o'er.
 It is not night, and it is not day ;
 Calm in the twilight she passed away,
 Just as the star, where the cloud was
 riven,
 Pointed her way through the opening
 heaven.

Near the tent-door was a sickly group,
 And oh the tears ran down their cheeks
 like rain ;
 One said, "There is not a man in
 our troop
 But would have died just to save her
 a pain :
 I would have died for her ; so would
 a score of us ;
 Broken and maimed, she was worth
 many more of us ;
 God help the poor fellows, now she
 is gone ;
 She was like my mother when last I
 was down."

When it was told at the drinking bar,
 The flagon untasted was dashed on the
 board ;
 Hushed was the chorus of glory and
 war—
 Others were trusted, but she was adored.
 No one shuffled the cards again,
 Rattled the dice now, or called a
 main.
 "Who's for the trenches? we must
 have it out ;
 Now is the time, lads, to try the
 Redoubt."

Belted with hell-fire, and shrouded
 with smoke,
 Girdled with rifle-balls as with a
 wall,
 Yet with a yell from the trenches
 they broke,
 Plunging through rifle-balls, hell-fire,
 and all.
 'Twas not for glory they stormed the
 Redoubt ;
 'Twas that the grief of their wild
 hearts must out.
 That was her monument ; and they
 cried,
 "God and Saint Bridget !" as each
 man died.

L'ENVOI

I do but paint a picture, just to show
 How cracks the old crust of Faith
 beneath our feet,
 Partly by light from heaven and fer-
 vent heat,
 Partly by fierce upheaval from below.
 Here fissures deep are gashed ; there
 but a rent
 Scores the shrunk surface, thirsting for
 fresh showers
 To water its dry herbs and drooping
 flowers ;
 But everywhere is great bewilderment.

God's ploughshare trenches well, nor
 will He wait,
 And see His fallow lying all unbroke,
 Because another's heifer takes the yoke,
 Nor is His furrow always clean and
 straight,

But still He maketh ready for His
 sowing,
 And scatters with the sweep of unseen
 hand
 Fresh seed of life upon the fresh-turned
 land,
 And gathers cloud and sunshine for
 its growing.

Oh, weep ye for the Home whose
 tottering wall
 The trembling heart with unfeigned
 anguish saw,
 And with untempered mortar daubed
 its flaw,
 Faith lacking Faith that God is over all.

Weep, yet rejoice ! for her unselfish
 deeds,
 Mightier than words, have bidden
 doubt away,
 And led him into light of better day,
 And Love, which is the soul of all
 the Creeds

R A B A N

RABAN

WHEN first I knew him, Raban was
 already
 Verging on age, yet full of lusty life;
 With all his senses perfect to enjoy
 The fatness and the sweetness of the
 earth,
 And all its beauty; and with all his mind
 Perfect to do its work—to reason well,
 To play with graceful fancy, or
 mirthful jest
 That rushed from him, like spark from
 glowing steel,
 I' the clash of argument: and he could
 soar
 Still into realms of thought that touch
 the stars,
 And lie about the Eternal; and his heart
 Was very young, and nothing loved
 so much
 As the fresh hopes of noble-purposed
 youth
 Not yet desponding of a glorious world.
 Trim and erect, with locks of iron-grey,
 A large eye full of light, and features
 thin
 That grew with age in beauty; a
 manner brisk
 And breezy; ready of speech for
 sharp retort,
 Or flowing period; given to dainty
 humour,
 Where delicate touches of quaint
 character

Flitted like smiles upon his words;
 he knew
 Affairs and books and men, and it
 was like
 Great music just to sit beside the fire,
 And hearken his discourse.
 One of a race,
 Often much slighted, often serving
 much,
 Who miss their aim in the first spring,
 and fall,
 A season, out of sight among the waste
 Of prodigal life; yet better so kept
 back
 In the young bud, than in the bloom
 of promise
 To be frost-bitten, for he found a way,
 And filled a larger space by having
 failed
 Than first success had given him.
 He had once
 Sought the Priest's office, well content
 to be
 The humble pastor of a humble flock
 Of shepherds 'mong green hills, or of
 dull hinds
 Whose thoughts are of the mixen or
 the calves
 Hard to lift Heavenward. But he
 was not made
 For the Priest's work, whose Sundays
 domineer
 The week with preaching, as he goes
 about
 Slow sermon-grinding till his thought
 is thin

As the shrill fife, the while he makes his rounds, And hears the parish-gossip, and grows small With its small interests, only, now and then, Lit up by broader lights that shoot athwart From that dread door which opens for all men. Orthodox? Well; I think he had not any Cut-and-dry scheme—equation nicely framed With <i>plus</i> and <i>minus</i> quantities and powers, Subtracting or dividing human sins And sorrows of the Highest, till the end Brought out salvation neatly. Some- how he Could never work the problem out so clear, Having an Infinite quantity to deal with, That would not balance with a sum of littles, However multiplied. Therefore he had No handy formulas for faith, and shunned Familiar phrase of preaching, which he called Old pulpit-dust beat from the cushion when Thought is most lacking; also he would try Perilous flights, at times, into far realms Of fine imagination, where his flock Followed him only with their eyes, as one Watches a cloud soar up, and fade away Into the setting sun. And yet his faith Was true to the old Creeds he left behind,	As the fresh art of a new age still holds All past achievement in its scheme of progress, And moves on the old lines. He kept their spirit; Only the framework, and the rigid joinings Clamped, as with iron, by much- hammered texts, He loosened; for he deemed the truth was there, But yet in forms too rounded to be true, And clothed as with an armour which grew not Though the man grew within, till what was meant For a defence brought weakness. Thus, at times, He seemed to assail their most secure beliefs, And sap the main foundation of their hopes, When he was merely setting free the soul Of Truth, on which they lived, and which he loved; Only they knew it not without the husk, Nor could they live on it without the straw, Which they were used to, while he would refine, And from all gross admixture purify, Till he could sip it like an odorous dew. So have I heard him tell that, by and by, No flock would eat his pasture; where he came They wandered off to sit beside the fire, Or saunter in the fields considering The lilies how they grew, or to rehearse Questions once learnt beside a mother's knee,
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And pray for the old gospel of their youth.

"And they were right," he said;
"man cannot live

Without his formulas—I was a fool!

Your disembodied, unfamiliar thought,

Like disembodied spirit, frightens him;

Or he seems left, as naked in the cold

And dark, amid the crash of breaking ice,

And polar fogs wherein he sees no light,

But the ice-glimmer everywhere. And yet

'Tis well for you to-day that I was left

To play the fool; I think ye have more light

That I lie in the shade; your life is larger

That mine was straitened—freer through my bonds."

I found among his papers sundry traces Of that old time, when he was preaching faith

Just as he learned it, day by day, and oft

Erasing one day what he writ the last

Upon their puzzled minds; a hint or two

Of hope and failure, and some things he called

"Crystallised sermon," tied up with a string.

So he forsook the priesthood, trying first

Scholastic tasks, and in his leisure hours

Penning brief essays, quaintly humorous,

Or thoughtful with the flavour of a soul

Fresh from the vision of a dewy world

That still seemed very good: and people noted

The promise in them of an unknown power.

Ere long the breakfast table mirthful grew

With an incisive and sarcastic wit

That played about our cloudy politics With ridicule like reason; now and then

Unfolding, too, new depths of social right,

And hopes for men that staggered the dull brain

Of rural squires believing in their game,

And rural priests believing in their teinds,

And burghers cushioned in old customs, good

For people well-to-do, but quickened life

And expectation in the poor oppressed.

Soon this man grew, by writing and by speech,

A power among us; unto some he seemed

A Firebrand fain to set the world ablaze,

Class against class, and all against the Faith

Which anchored men to God by prophet-forms,

Where prophet-vision was not: but to some

He brought the hope of better days a-coming,

And brighter future for their dismal life.

But when I knew him, he had dropt his pen,

And done his work, and took his well-earned leisure

Cheerfully, as a man who had not lived

In vain; but could look back upon a path

Troubled with battle and turmoil, hope and fear,

And frequent disappointment and defeat,

Yet brightened, too, by trophies of success—

By growth of right, of freedom, and of knowledge,

And power to grow still more, wherein he had No little part. Now, round his restful years Honour and love were gathered; gratitude Grew out of service lightly once esteemed, But in its full achievement plainly seen To fruit with good for all. A happy lot Wisely to serve your day, and in the glow Of evening feel its calm steal over you, And see the people glad, and hear them speak Of the ill times you helped to better for them. I met him, first, when hunting for a book Among the stalls, where he was hunt- ing too, Now his life's chiefest business, and its joy: And I, being fearful that he sought the same Rare volume, looked askance at him, and weighed My scanty purse with his, doubtful; till he Who knew book-hunting minds, and slender means, Saluted me, and we grew friends ere long, Having a common love of curious lore. Thus meeting, by and by, I found my way Into his home, which once had been made bright By a fair helpmate, and by joyous girls Lightsome as flowers: but it was lonely now, And silent, for they all had gone before Into the silent land. I found his rooms All lined with books, and littered too with books	On chair and table and floor; pale- vellumed classics— Sound English calf, respectable—grey- paper German, soon dog-eared—French like buttercups— Aldine editions costly, beautiful— And many tiny Elzevirs—and Scotch Imprints at Capmahoun—tall copies scarce— Fair tomes emitted by the press beloved Of him who, praising Folly, smote the monk, And grinned out of his hood: books everywhere,— Folio and quarto, duodecimo,— Luxurious editions—titles quaint With curious woodcuts—travels, stories, poems; All precious rubbish that a Book-worm loves; And there I revelled—who so happy as I? What joyous hours we had there as he showed How this was precious for a curious blunder, That for an autograph, one for a comma Oddly misplaced, another for its margin, Its type, its title, or its colophon! Skilled in this lore, he yet laughed at his skill, And passed a thousand jests upon a taste So foolish, while he fondled some loved prize, Quarto or folio, like a babe beloved, And told the story of its search and capture, And how he brought it home like one who walked Among the stars, and sang for very joy. We grew fast friends, for all his friends were young, And that which linked him with the Past, his love
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Of ancient lore, was less than that
which drew

His heart to the opening Future ; full
of hope

He hung about the dawn, like morning
star,

And watched the coming day ; not
fearing greatly,

Although he saw the germs of larger
change,

And deeper movements in the thoughts
of man

Wrestling for birth, than centuries had
known.

But falling sick, at length, he slowly sank
Beneath a wasting ill that broke his
strength,

Yet not his spirit, for he still was gay,
And grimly jested at his racking cough,

Made merry with his bones that flesh-
less grew,

Cheating the worms, he said ; and
under all

Lay a great calm of Faith and surest
Hope.

One evening, sitting lonely by the fire
A letter came to me, black-bordered,
sealed

With skull and cross-bones, yet his
writing plain,

I opened it in fear, and there I read

THE LETTER

I begged hard for an hour of grace
From that grim ferryman who plies
His wherry to the fore-doomed place
Of all the foolish, and all the wise.
But not an hour the churl will give,
Nor deigns to answer me, though I,
Who always was in haste to live,
Would rather take my time to die.

Another sun, and I shall know
The secret Death has kept so well :
What wonders in a day or so
A letter writ by me could tell !

And yet who knows? I've mostly
found

That secrets are but sorry stuff ;
And those that lie beneath the ground
Perchance are commonplace enough.

I've lived my life ; it has not been
What once I hoped, nor what I feared ;
And why should that we have not seen
Be other than has yet appeared ?
There are no breaks in God's large plan,
But simple growth from less to more ;
And each to-morrow brings to man
But what lay in the day before.

The river has its cataract,
And yet the waters down below
Soon gather from the foam, compact,
And on like those above it flow :
And so the new life may begin
Where this one stopt, with finer powers,
Perhaps, a subtler thread to spin,
And years to work instead of hours.

What has my life been that my heart
Should be so tranquil at this time,
So free to ply the careless art
Of guessing, and of tagging rhyme ?
Here on this solemn brink of doom
I seem not much to fear or care,
But peer into the gathering gloom,
And mostly wonder what is there.

And that has been my bane all through
That never yet would life appear
So real that my hand must do
Its work with earnestness and fear :
Still I could dream and speculate,
And turn it somehow into play,
And nothing woke a perfect hate,
Or love that had its perfect way.

I tried the highest life—and failed ;
A lower, with a small success ;
I loved ; I sorrowed ; laughed and railed
At fortune and her fickleness ;

And powers I might have trained to grow
I frittered, for I was not wise ;
And now their fire is burning low,
Their smoke is bitter in the eyes.

Ah ! wasted gifts and trifling gains !
Ah ! life that by the abysses played,
And partly knew the griefs and pains
That from the depths their moaning
made,

And partly felt them too, and yet
Could be content to dream and write,
Or in old story to forget,
And never wrought with all my might !

You'll find, in an odd drawer, the sum
Of that life, rich in nought but friends—
A grasshopper's dry-throated hum,
A hank of broken odds and ends ;
Do with it as you will ; I give
My all to you ; perchance it may
Beacon another soul to live
More wisely through its changeful day.

You'll pay my debts—they are not large ;
You'll bury me where the poor folk
sleep ;

And for the rest, my only charge
Is that the dear old books you'll keep.
If ghosts come back, mine will be met
Upon the steps among the shelves,
Searching for mildew, moth, or wet
In the small quartos or the twelves.

And now farewell, my lad ; fear God,
And keep your faith whole, if you can.
And where the devil has smoothed
your road,

Keep to the right like an honest man ;
See that your heart is pure and just,
See that your way is clean and true ;
By and by we shall all be dust,
Yet by and by I shall meet with you.

The world is losing faith in God,
And thereby losing faith in man,
For now the earthworm and the sod
Wind up, they say, our little span ;

But they that hold by the Divine,
Clasp too the Human in their faith,
And with immortal hopes entwine
The silence and the gloom of death.

I read, and, hastening to his house, I
found

'Twas even as he said. In his last hours
He wrote, and gave strict orders not to
send

The letter till his final breath was drawn,
And now he lay there mystic, beautiful.

Never, in all those years, had I once
dreamed

That he, in secret, plied the Poet's art.
He flaunted in the face the hardest facts,
Brought reasons by the score, had
strokes of wit

When reasons failed, and bubbled o'er
with fun ;

But never passing word, or tremulous
tone,

Hinted of Love's sweet sorrow, or
of song,

Long brooding o'er the tragic bliss
o' the heart ;

Till now I found these lyrics scattered,
most,

Loose in a drawer, and cast them into
shape

As I could trace the thread : and
gathered up

The broken fragments with the care
of love,

That nothing should be lost of a true life.
For he that truly lives, and clearly sees

The truth wrapt in his life, and can
set forth,

Amid the trivial and the commonplace,
The soul of truth for which he dared
to live,

Leaves to the world a nobler legacy
Than wealth of hoarded gold, in that
he kindles

Lights on the dim, uncertain way we go.

PRELUDES

DREAMING

I DREAM beside that silent sea
Which yet has mystic voices low
That whisper potent words to me
From the dim, haunted long ago ;
And as the waves, with measured beat,
Drift up the slow wrack to my feet,
Faces gaze from it, sad and sweet.

So come they, as the stars appear
Even while you gaze on the blank
 night ;
For ere you wis, lo ! far and near
The dusk is all agleam with light ;
A mighty host, uncalled, they come,
And without sound of trump or drum,
But yet their silence is not dumb.

They speak to me of hopes and fears
That yet can make my bosom thrill,
As o'er the weary waste of years
The dead hands reach, and touch
 me still :
For that old Past still lives to me ;
Its phantom faces still I see
More life-like than the living be.

WORK AND SPIRIT

Is it the work that makes life great
 and true ?
Or the true soul that, working as it can,
Does faithfully the task it has to do,
And keepeth faith alike with God and
 man ?

Ah ! well ; the work is something ;
 the same gold
Or brass is fashioned now into a coin,
Now into fairest chalice that shall hold
To panting lips the sacramental wine :

Here the same marble forms a cattle-
 trough
For brutes by the wayside to quench
 their thirst,
And there a god emerges from the rough
Unshapely block—yet they were twins
 at first.

One pool of metal in the melting pot
A sordid, or a sacred thought inspires ;
And of twin marbles from the-quarry
 brought
One serves the earth, one glows with
 altar-fires.

There's something in high purpose of
 the soul
To do the highest service to its kind ;
There's something in the art that can
 unroll
Secrets of beauty shaping in the mind.

Yet he who takes the lower room,
 and tries
To make his cattle-trough with honest
 heart,
And could not frame the god with
 gleaming eyes,
As nobly plays the more ignoble part.

And maybe, as the higher light breaks in
And shows the meaner task he has to do,
He is the greater that he strives to win
Only the praise of being just and true.

For who can do no thing of sovran
 worth
Which men shall praise, a higher task
 may find,
Plodding his dull round on the
 common earth,
But conquering envies rising in the
 mind.

And God works in the little as the great
A perfect work, and glorious over all—
Or in the stars that choir with joy elate,
Or in the lichen spreading on the wall.

CONSTRAINT

I would not that another eye should see
What I now write, or other ear should hear.

Then wherefore do I write it, being clear
To me, unwrit? and oh the pain to me!
I hide my heart, and yet unbare it here,
Then hide what I have writ, and mean
to burn;

I gather life's grey ashes in an urn,
And brood o'er them with many a
dropping tear,
Dreading to keep, yet shrinking to
destroy

The treasured relics. O my Love!
my bliss!

Is it all ashes now, that infinite joy?
Leaving no other joy to me but this,
That I must open the old wound, and
take

This blood from it, or else my heart
will break.

THE HOUSE IN THE SQUARE

THE HOUSE

O THE House in the Square! dear
House in the Square!

With the little grass-plots, and the
mouldy green tubs

Where the hoops fell away from the
pale-flowering shrubs;

But the widow was kind, and her
daughters were fair,

And all the day long there was sun-
shine there,

In the House in the Square.

A poor scholar's widow who still had
her share

Of life's vexing troubles, how kindly
she took

To our thoughtful life busy with
lecture and book!

And with motherly heart she would
sweeten our care

O'er the mild cup of tea, and the
homely fare

Of the House in the Square.

To her all the way of our life we laid bare
Its hopes and its fears, and she made
them her own,

And soothed us, or cheered us, as one
who had known

The outlets that open in depths of
despair;

And we all came away with a light-
somer air

From the House in the Square.

The widow was kind; but her daugh-
ters were rare,

Bright girls—our Muriel, Myra, and
Loo:

Nimble their fingers, their wits nimble
too,

And like sunbeams and singing of birds,
unaware

Of the brightness they brought, they
would trip up the stair

Of the House in the Square.

Never maidens more frank, never
maidens more fair,

Never maidens were simpler or truer
than they;

'They could think as we thought, yet
their hearts were as gay

As the feather-head fribbles that simper
and stare,

When you speak as we spoke all the
long evenings there

At the House in the Square.

There our Logic we aired, splitting
many a hair;

And the quick-witted girls, skilled in
mellow-toned Greek,

Reading just what we read, of their
Plato would speak,

Or they sang an old song, or they
played a blithe air,
When discussion grew hot about any
affair

In the House in the Square.

Their father, a scholar, would have
them beware

How they squandered their lives on
the shallow and sweet ;

They should know what men knew, to
be helps to them meet ;

And the learning he loved he was eager
to share

With the daughters he loved, until death
found him there

At the House in the Square.

We were all of us poor ; but we did
not much care,

For we sought the best riches of
wisdom and truth

With the courage of faith, and the
ardour of youth ;

And with Homer and Shakespeare for
friends, we could bear

The dust of the carriage that passed
with a stare

At the House in the Square.

How it haunts me, that home with its
scholarly air !

Those brave, gentle souls 'mid the
city's turmoil,

All so earnest in thought, and so patient
in toil,

And so true to the right, and so patient
to bear !

Ah ! would I were now as I wont to
be there

At the House in the Square !

MURIEL

Whoever looked at Muriel, said :
That girl has soul, her heart is high,
And she has great thoughts in her head,
And scorn of meanness in her eye ;

How sweetly gracious she can smile !
Yet she looks haughty all the while,
And beams on you in the goddess style.

Whoever spoke to Muriel, thought :
Her looks are nothing to her speech ;
That girl a noble strain has got,
And soars beyond the common reach ;
Yet with her high and daring mood,
And with her faith in human good,
Will she be ever understood ?

Was it Mary Stuart, or Joan of Arc,
Or Charlotte Corday that lived in her ?
Did she bewitch with glances dark,
Or make your noblest pulses stir ?
Shall he who seeks her love to win,
Ere he gather its harvest in,
Be great in spirit, or great in sin ?

A fair enigma ! Low-browed, small,
Yet walking in her queenly grace,
You would have vowed her stately, tall,
Like Dian coming from the chase,
With bow unstrung, and flushed with
pride,
The quivered arrows by her side,
Every tip with crimson dyed.

Was she a flirt whose roving eyes
Entangled hearts with cunning wiles ?
Or was she maiden without disguise,
Bright with sunny and artless smiles ?
What was the subtle charm that
wrought,
So that, hopeful or hoping nought,
Still to win her love men sought ?

And when she spoke in homeliest strain,
What was the spell that held them fast ?
And when she smote their hearts with
pain,
What was the glamour o'er them cast,
That she had but to smile anew,
And close to her again they drew
Holding her all that is good and true ?

Still in extremes of good or ill,
 She seemed to play a fateful part ;
 Some felt it bliss to do her will,
 Some found in it an aching heart ;
 But let them joy or let them ache,
 The task she set them they would make
 Their chiefest business for her sake.

She did not wonder at her lot,
 But, all unconscious, held her way,
 Nor cared for incense that she got,
 Nor heeded what the world might say :
 Unwittingly her spells she wove,
 And proudly lived apart, above
 All the surmise of hate or love.

A beautiful enigma she,
 Our Muriel, with the dark bright eyes !
 And still her beauty seemed to be
 Flashed on you with a fresh surprise :
 And when they left her, men would look
 As if inspired by some great Book
 That did their meaner soul rebuke.

LOO

Loo, Loo ! rather handsome than
 pretty,
 Deft at a pudding, or stocking, or ditty,
 Quick at a riddle, and keen in retort ;
 Knitting her brows now o'er polyglot
 learning,
 Then toiling hard at her sewing and
 darning,
 Brimful of life, or at work or in sport.

Loo, Loo ! where on earth can she be ?
 A Frau they tell me in Germany,
 Seeing to Saur Kraut, plump and fair :
 Now in the store-room, now at the
 dresser,
 Kitchen-maid, waiting-maid to her
 Professor,
 Just as she was at the House in the
 Square.

Loo, Loo ! she will toil at his Greek,
 Help his prelections, and fittingly speak
 To scholars of Homer, to Burschen
 of beer,
 Will search out in Plato the reference-
 passage,
 And see to the Calf's-flesh, the cabbage
 and sausage,
 And the pipe and the mug and the old
 household gear.

Loo, Loo ! she can sew, she can spin,
 Can boil, stew and fry, see to flagon
 and binn,
 Read the "Birds" and the "Clouds"
 with fine sense of the fun,
 Grasp Aeschylus' thought of the Fates,
 and the Human
 That softly gleams out in Euripides'
 Woman,
 Then seek the Beer-garden, and knit
 in the sun.

Loo, Loo ! what will she not do
 For a husband she loves, ever faithful
 and true ?
 Is he off to the Sanskrit ? she'll study
 the Veds :
 And Babylon's stone-books and arrow-
 head letters,
 Oh, she'll find the trick of them as soon
 as her betters,
 And then turn to making shirt-collars
 or beds.

Loo, Loo ! it was always her way ;
 She said men were failures, and had
 had their day,
 But women were versatile, nimble as
 air,
 Fit for the humblest tasks, fit for the
 highest,
 Pouring life-blood into themes that
 were driest.—
 Happy Professor, put under her care !

MYRA

She was the fairest of all the three ;
 Yet not at first she caught the eye,
 For in her maiden meekness she
 Wooed shadow like the primrose shy,
 And seventeen summers hardly brought
 Her lissom form to perfect grace,
 And the great purple eyes still shot
 Too large a light on the oval face ;
 Yet she was fairest of all the three,
 E'en were she nothing at all to me.

She was the wisest of them, though
 Not so nimble and deft of wit ;
 But her heart thought, and made her
 know

What for the loving heart was fit ;
 And when you touched on higher
 chords,

With eager eyes and parted lips,
 You caught her listening to your words,
 Quick with mind to the finger-tips :
 For she was wisest of all the three,
 Had she been nothing at all to me.

She was the sweetest of them—sweet
 As summer air from clover field ;
 And had a charity complete,
 A touch, too, and a word that healed,
 And therewith, oh so blithe a heart !
 That she would laugh as birds must sing,
 But could not play a bitter part
 That she might say a clever thing.
 Wisest, sweetest, fairest she,
 E'en were she nothing at all to me.

And she was all the world to me ;
 I loved her though she knew it not,
 And she loved, though I did not see
 She gave me back the love I sought ;
 We loved, and yet we never wist
 Till many years had come and gone ;
 We never spoke it, never kissed,
 But loved in silence and alone.
 Fairest, dearest of all the three,
 Oh, she was all the world to me.

LOVE

Oh, what is this that in my heart is
 singing,

Like sweet bird, caged there, carolling
 all day ?

Oh, what is this such gladness to me
 bringing

That life is bliss, and work is merry
 play,

And round my steps, lo ! sunny flowers
 are springing

As I go singing, singing on my way ?
 O Love, glad Love !

Ah ! what is this that in my heart is
 sighing,

Like captive vainly moaning to be free ?
 Ah ! what is this so heavy in me lying ?

No rest there is, nor any work for me,
 And leaf and flower are drooping now
 and dying

As I go sighing, sighing wearily ?
 O Love, sad Love !

What thing is this my foolish heart is
 dreaming,

That I should love, and long for yon
 bright star ?

I sigh or sing, but she, unmoved, is
 gleaming

As in high glory where the angels are—
 I but a glow-worm on the earth dull-

beaming,
 While she is gleaming, gleaming there
 afar.

O Love, vain Love !

SPEECHLESS

O thou fire-edged cloudlet
 Brimming o'er with light !

Like my heart thou hangest
 'Twixt the day and night.

Silently thou hangest,
Seemingly at rest,
Yet there is strange tumult
Boiling in thy breast.

O my heart o'er-brimming
With burning thought of her,
Could'st thou only speak it,
How her heart must stir!

But my love is surging,
Like the hurrying wave
Breaking on the silence
Of the dripping cave;

Breaking on the silence
Of the tangled shelf,
And falling back in foam-bells
Still upon itself.

THE LICENTIATE

DILL'S LODGINGS

I SEE the little dingy street,
The little room three stories high,
The little woman, clean and neat,
With kindly smile, and kindling eye,
The paper chintz, the staring prints,
The bird whose carol would not cease,
And the cracked china ornaments
Ranged stiffly on the mantelpiece.

A dingy street among the poor,
Thronging with children day and night,
With sluttish women at every door
Gossiping in the waning light:
Yet oh the nights I there have seen!
The humour kindling every face,
The play of wit, the logic keen
That glorified the homely place!

Simple our life, with little change,
And yet it was a bright romance,
Fresh with the wonderful and strange
Of youth's enchanted golden trance;

How fresh in powers, in faiths, in
thoughts!

How full that fertile time appears!—
We jotted down in pregnant notes
The sum of all the after years.

The scholar's aim we held aloft,
The fearless search for what is true,
As fresh discoveries called us oft
Old schemes of Nature to review,
And to adjust the thought and fact,
And to make room for growth yet
more,
And to believe that God may act
In ways we had not dreamed before.

We had our passing hours of doubt,
But did not nurse the shadowy throng,
For we had work to go about
That would not hold with doubting
long.

And looking back on those brave years,
Unspotted by the world and free,
Meagre and poor to-day appears,
When earth is so much more to me.

CONFIDENCE

Strange, that for all the wrecks upon
the shore,
And all that, helpless, drift about the
sea,
We never dream that such our fate
may be,
Or shrink from life that may be one
wreck more!

But fresh hope comes to each fresh soul,
as light
Dawns on the waters, dimpling in their
waves,
With running laughter tripping o'er
the graves
Where former hopes lie buried out
of sight.

And we are sure, and eager for the race,
And crowd all sail, and deem not for
an hour

That life is not worth living, or that
power
Is not in us to master time and space.

Is it that Nature, with a wanton's smile,
Allures, but to delude, and break our
hearts,

Or worse than break them, when the
soul departs
Of nobleness, that dwelt in us erewhile?

Or does she seem to us what we desire,
Though herself true, and hating all
deceit,
And all we hear is but our own heart's
beat,
And all we see but what our dreams
inspire?

SCATTERED

Scattered to East and West and North,
Some with the faint heart, some the
stout,

Each to the battle of life went forth,
And all alone we must fight it out.

We had been gathered from cot and
grange,

From the moorland farm, and the
terraced street,

Brought together by chances strange,
And knit together by friendships sweet.

Not in the sunshine, not in the rain,
Not in the night of the stars untold,
Shall we ever all meet again,
Or be as we were in the days of old.

But as ships cross, and more cheerily go
Having changed tidings upon the sea,
So I am richer by them, I know,
And they are not poorer, I trust, by me.

WAITING

Wearily drag the lagging hours
To him who, waiting to be hired,
Is by enforced idlesse tired
More than by strain of all his powers :
Wearily, having in his heart
The hope to play a worthy part,
And scorning each ignoble art.

Girt for the fight, he waits forlorn,
And oh ! it irks him sore to rest,
And watch, too oft with mocking jest,
Things done that fill his soul with scorn,
As he with folded hands must sit,
While lesser men, with scanty wit,
Get all the work, and tangle it.

So life grows bitter ; or perhaps
Hope flirts a moment in his face,
Then trips off to another place,
And pours its treasures in the laps
Of some dull soul, whose easy feet
Will tread the old familiar beat,
Contented getting much to eat.

And lo ! the work remains undone,
And work is what he hungers for,
But cannot find an open door,
And loiters idly in the sun,
Still waiting with his heart on fire,
And wasting with his great desire,
Waiting and finding none to hire.

A WISH

Just a path that is sure,
Thorny or not,
And a heart honest and pure,
Keeping the path that is sure,
That be my lot :

Life is no merry-making,
Hark ! how the waves are breaking !

Just plain duty to know,
 Irksome or not,
 And truer and better to grow
 In doing the duty I know,
 That I have sought :
 Life is no merry-making,
 How the stiff pine trees are quaking !

Just to keep battling on,
 Weary or not,
 Sure of the Right alone,
 As I keep battling on,
 True to my thought :
 Life is no merry-making,
 Ah ! how men's hearts are breaking !

SELF-CONTEMPT

I bear a message to the sons of men,
 Faithful and true,
 And it should drop on earth like tender
 rain,
 But yet I bear my message all in vain,
 For let me do
 Whate'er I may, and plead howe'er I
 can,
 I touch no heart of man.

How should I ? Though I bear a
 message true,
 The thing I want
 Is, room for me to live, and work to do ;
 And so I go about to places new
 With patience scant,
 And tell my tale, and then go on my way,
 And life grows dull and grey.

And I am full of self-contempt and
 scorn

To go about
 Thus, falsely speaking truth to hearts
 forlorn,

And jibe myself that I, some ugly morn,
 Shall be found out

To be no prophet whom the Lord
 hath sent,

Or for His service meant.

But is my message true ? To-day, I
 seem

Full of the lights
 That from the bleeding Christ so
 grandly stream ;
 And lo ! to-morrow, it is like a dream
 Of restless nights :
 And I have drifted back into the shade,
 Unsayng what I said.

I seek a gospel which I should have
 found

Before I tried
 To preach, with unfixed heart, the
 faith profound
 Which tells the captive that he is
 unbound

By Him who died
 To ope his prison door, and set him free
 From all his misery.

O heart that would be true ! O hard
 estate,

To falset bound !
 This only comfort is there in my fate ;
 My message I did ne'er prevaricate
 With tinkling sound

To tickle ears, nor played with showy
 trick
 Of tinsel rhetoric.

I've mocked myself, and laughed with
 bitter jest

At much I saw ;
 But yet I kept a true heart in my breast,
 Nor turned, in all my trouble and unrest,
 From the high law

Of present duty ; and my peace is great
 Even in this hard estate.

HOPE

A little Kirk, beneath a steep green
 hill,

With a grey spire that peeps o'er tall
 elm-trees,

In a still, pastoral land of brook and rill,
And broomy knoll, and sleepy, dripping
mill,

Far from the stir of cities and of seas :

And near the Kirk, low nestling in the
copse,
With honeysuckle clad, and roses red,
A little Manse, whose sweet-flowered
garden slopes

Down to the river where the river drops,
With murmuring ripple, o'er a pebbly
bed.

How happily the days and years
might flow

Among the silent shepherds brooding
long,

In pious labour, studious to know,
And patient service, till their life should
grow

From thoughtful silence into thought-
ful song ;

To pass from house to house in visit free,
Welcome as sunshine at the smoking
hearth,

To take the little children on the knee,
And bless them, as He did in Galilee
Who came with blessing unto all the
earth ;

To speak to them of Duty and of God,
And of the Love that clasped the bitter
Cross,

And of the health and comfort of His
rod,

And go before them on the way He
trod,

Who found Life's glory and fulness in
its loss ;

To share in all the joys and griefs
they have,

To bless the bridal, not else thought
complete,

To stand beside the cradle and the grave,
And tell them how the meek and true
and brave

Turn graves to cradles where the sleep
is sweet.

O happy lot ! with one, to brighten life,
Smiling soft-eyed beside the evening
fire,

Sharing the sorrow, sweetening all the
strife,

And leaning on her lord, a loving wife,
And cherished by her lord with fond
desire.

Dream of the golden morning of
the day !

Dream of the night beneath the fold-
ing star !

Dream of the hungry heart that in
me lay !

Dream by the river rippling soft away
Into the tremulous moonshine—which
dreams are.

THE BROOK AND THE RIVER

A stream from the heath-purpled
mountain

Comes, with a gush,
From the star-moss round its fountain,
Breaking the hush
Of the silent, songless mountain.

Pewit-and-curlew-haunted,
Foaming, it flows

There where the wild deer undaunted
Bells, as it goes

Pewit-and-curlew-haunted.

It plays with the rowan and bracken
And grey lichen stone,

But never its pace will it slacken,
Still hurrying on,

Though it plays with the rowan and
bracken.

A river winds 'neath the shadows
 Of pine-wood and oak,
 And hums to the bee-humming
 meadows,
 And the white flock
 That bleats from the mists and the
 shadows.

Down to the still river hastens
 The swift-flowing stream,
 And aye as the distance it lessens
 Its bright waters gleam,
 And it leaps and sparkles and hastens

Till in the calm-flowing river
 Softly it sinks,
 And hears not and heeds not for ever
 What fern or tree thinks,
 But only the low-whispering river.

O love! my river full-flowing,
 Wait, wait for me;
 O love! my love, ever-growing,
 Hastens to thee
 For rest in thy river calm-flowing.

FAILURE

I see the Kirk beneath the hill,
 The tall elms rustling in the breeze,
 The modest Manse, so calm and still,
 The dripping of the sleepy mill
 That hides among the nutting trees.

I look down, with a hungry heart,
 On the broad river rippling cool;
 The fisher plies his patient art,
 The trout leaps, and the May flies dart
 About the slowly eddying pool.

Low sunbeams on the meadows play,
 The moon shows like a film of cloud,
 A star from the red skirts of day
 Peeps to another star far away,
 And the hill is wrapt in a misty shroud.

A shepherd's wife comes to the door,
 Shading her eyes with large brown
 hand,
 He is away on the upland moor,
 And nothing she sees but a kestrel soar,
 Keen-eyed, spying far over the land.

There is no voice but the rushing rills,
 And creak of frightened pewit's wing,
 And bleat of young lambs on the hills,
 Heard only when a silence fills
 The soul, and all the space of things.

What made my eyes grow dim and
 blind?—
 Ah, when the heart is heavy and low,
 The beauty that on earth we find,
 Or strain of music on the wind,
 Shall touch it like an utter woe!

SUBMISSION

I will remember it for aye,
 Though there I was forgotten soon;
 It haunts me in the sunny day,
 And under stars and moon.
 It was the only hope I had
 That unto near fulfilment grew;
 A while it made me very glad;
 A while it made me very sad;
 And then I knew
 'Twas but another thread He wove
 In the mixed web of Father-love.

MORALISING

Roses fair on thorns do grow;
 And they tell me, even so
 Sorrows into virtues grow:
 Heigh-ho!
 It was a stroke
 Brought the stream from the flinty
 rock.

Frosty winter kills out weeds ;
 And they tell me, evil seeds
 Die out in the heart that bleeds :
 Heigh-ho !
 And some have faith
 That dying is the death of Death.

Ah ! the loss may yet be gain,
 Bitter bliss may spring from pain,
 As the bird-songs after rain :
 Heigh-ho !
 But nought shall be
 Ever again the same to me.

CRYSTALLISED SERMONS

NOTE

HE had no written sermons, only took
 Brief jottings upon any scrap of paper—
 Bits of old letters, envelopes, or
 labels—
 And there the thought was scrawled,
 but half the matter
 Was illustration roughly etched, a kind
 Of hieroglyph whereof he had the key,
 Now lost for ever : etchings strongly
 drawn,
 With a clear eye for form, and touched
 with humour
 Or pathos ; so he penned his similes.
 But certain thoughts that took his
 fancy more,
 And, as I guess, had troubled hearers
 more,
 These he had gathered up, and put in
 verse,
 As sermon-matter crystallised, once
 spoken
 In amplitude of phrase, but now
 compact ;
 Not to be preached, but crooned in
 quiet hours
 Of musing by the fire. Poor sermons
 truly

For common folk with common
 thoughts and sins
 And sorrows, and no reaching out
 of hope
 To find a larger faith in Charity ;
 Yet notable for a Licentiate
 Starting, on Saturdays, with little
 valise
 And threadbare garments, for some
 homely kirk
 Among the hills, or on the village
 green,
 Whither he went, and fired his aimless
 shot,
 Then passed away again, and was
 forgot.

SACRIFICE

“ And there he builded an altar unto the
 Lord that appeared unto him.”—Gen. xii. 7.

Is there Bridge-maker who can throw
 An arch across the gulf of years,
 That we may travel back, and know
 The brooding thoughts, and haunting
 fears,
 And clinging faiths of them who raised
 Their altars 'neath the evening star,
 And offered to the gods, and praised,
 And drave the dogs and birds afar ?

Vainly, I seek to know his mind
 Who smote the lamb with gleaming
 knife,
 And sprinkled blood, and hoped to find
 The peace of a diviner life.
 Far off he seems, I cannot tell
 Whether beneath me, or above,
 Or compassed round with shades of hell,
 Or trembling in the bliss of love !

I gaze back from the brink of time
 On shadowy forms of early days,
 That in the morning, loom sublime,
 God-guided on untravelled ways ;

But o'er the vague, vast chasm that parts
 Their thought from mine I cannot go ;
 I wot not how their troubled hearts
 Were calmed by making blood to flow.

Yet once wherever man had trod,
 Or sin had grown from base desire,
 He built an altar to his god,
 And laid the faggot on the fire,
 And brought the choicest of the flock
 From frolic by its bleating dam,
 And laid upon the unhewn rock
 The tender kid, or spotless lamb.

The knife into its throat was driven,
 The blood was sprinkled on the stone,
 The smell of fat went up to heaven,
 That on the leaping flame was thrown ;
 And he before his god was glad,
 And prayed, and sang his evening hymn,
 And laid him down to sleep, and had
 Bright dreams until the stars grew dim.

Thus did the Hebrew on the plain
 Of Moreh, while Heaven, many-eyed,
 Unweeping, saw the throbbing pain,
 Or smiled even as the victim died,
 And smelled a sweeter smell from blood,
 He wist, than from the myriad flowers
 That breathed, from shining bell and
 bud,
 Their incense through the dewy hours.

The subtle-witted Greek with art
 Was fain the anguish to adorn,
 And singing with a sprightly heart,
 Led the young kid with sprouting horn,
 Flower-garlanded, into the grove,
 And there by crystal fount or brook,
 Into the life of Nature wove
 The slender thread of life he took.

The Norseman slew the mighty steed
 That bore him in the battle fray,
 And ate the flesh, and drank the mead,
 And feasted Hella-thoughts away,

And piled the logs upon the hearth,
 And called the gods, in stormy words,
 To send the hungry ravens forth
 To fatten at the feast of swords.

Yet darker rites were theirs who kisse
 Their hand unto the placid moon ;
 Or who the Tyrian Moloch wist
 To pacify with choicest boon
 Of babe or maid ; or where the Priest
 Stood grim beneath the Druid oak ;
 Or Aztec fed with ample feast
 The captives for the fateful rock.

What was it entered thus the soul,
 To give it calm, or promise bliss ?
 Strange that the ages, as they roll,
 Have dropped behind a thought like this,
 Which held the universal mind
 Of all the world when it was young !
 For now the key I cannot find
 In all that men have said or sung.

In mocking scorn, the Prophet laughed
 Loud at a hungering, thirsting God
 Who craved the flesh of bulls, or quaffed
 The reeking blood that died the sod,
 For every beast is His, and all
 The cattle with their clover-breath,
 And Love, that quickened great and
 small,
 Can feel no pleasure in their death.

They say the Giver of all life
 Is fain to take the life He gives,
 And will not spare, unless the knife
 May gash some other thing that lives ;
 And they are sure, and they are clear,
 While I in dizzying darkness grope,
 But trust that God will yet appear
 In star-gleams of a nobler hope.

I would not heed, though that old Faith
 Had spread its roots o'er all the earth,
 If they were withered now in death
 As having no abiding worth :

But from those roots still branches spring
That shape our thoughts of truth and
right,
And still of Sacrifice we sing,
And blood that maketh clean and white.

There was some passion, fear, or guilt
That emphasised expression thus,
As by a mighty oath, and felt
A peace it cannot give to us.
But what? Was it the soul's consent
To die for sin that it had done?
Nay; man's strong life was not yet spent
On threads by morbid conscience spun.

I know the anguish that is wrought
Into the web of highest bliss;
I know the Cross must be his lot
Who thrills with Love's redeeming kiss.
But when the Lamb or Bullock fell
'Neath the keen blade, or shattering
blow,
How that could make the sick heart
well,
Or nearer God—I do not know.

And yet the Lamb of God was slain
Or ere the age of sin began,
And wrapt in that prophetic pain
Is all the history of man;
And all the fulness of his life,
And all the greatness of his thought,
And all the peace of his long strife
Root in that Everlasting Ought.

THE STANDING STONES

"God at sundry times and in divers
manners spake in time past unto the
fathers."—Heb. i. 1.

A rolling upland, open and bare,
A blasted heath where the night wind
moans,
Eerie and weird, to the curlews there,
And the greedykite and the kestrel scare
Singing birds from the lightsome air.

High on the heath are the Standing
Stones,
Great, gaunt stones in a mystic ring,
Girdling a barrow where heroes' bones
Crumble to dust of death that owns
Them and their wars and faiths and
thrones.

Not far off is an oozy spring
Feeding a black and dismal pool;
There slow efts crawl, horse-leeches
cling,
And the dragon-fly whirs on restless
wing,
And near by the adder is coiled in
the ling;

And once an oak made a shadow cool,
Woven of its green boughs overhead,
And blithe birds sang in the leafage full;
Now but a raven, bird of dule,
Croaks on its stump from May to Yule.

But silently watching the silent dead
Stands the grey circle of sentinels,
Scarred and lichened, as ages sped
With snows, and dripping rains over-
head,
And suns, and the wasteful life they
bred.

Now, evermore where the dead man
dwells
The living have gone to seek for God,
And the Altar-fire of the Unseen tells,
Or the swing and the clash of Christian
bells
Summon to Lauds and Canticles.

And there, of old, in that bleak abode
Of wily lapwing and shrill curlew,
To circle and cairn they carried their
load
Of burdened thought, as they wearily
trod
On to the brink where they lost the road.

There dipped the Sun in the dripping
dew

His earliest beams ; and there he met
The Bel-fire kindling its answer true—
Light for the light in heaven that grew,
Worship-light to the Light-god due.

So men acknowledged, and paid their
debt,

In the old days, to the powers above,
Giving back that they were fain to get,
And piling the faggots, dry or wet,
Still as the keen stars rose and set.

Was not the instinct true that wove
Fire-worship thus for the god of fire ?
Give from below what ye get from
above,

Light for the heaven-light, Love for
its Love,

A holy soul for the Holy Dove.

God tunes for Himself the hallowed lyre
That shall truly His praises show ;
He gives the song that He will desire,
Ever new from the trembling wire,
Ever new from the heart on fire.

Back to its fountain let it flow
Whatsoever He sends to you ;
Mercy, if mercy of His ye know,
And if your joy He has made to grow,
Up to Him let its gladness go.

So in all faiths there is something true,
Even when bowing to stock or stone—
Something that keeps the Unseen in
view

Beyond the stars, and beyond the blue,
And notes His gifts with the worship
due.

For where the spirit of man has gone
A-groping after the Spirit divine,
Somewhere or other it touches the
Throne,

And sees a light that is seen by none,
But who seek Him that is sitting thereon.

Seek but provision of bread and wine,
High-ceiled houses, and heaps of gold,
Fools to flatter, and raiment fine,
All the wealth of the sea and mine—
And nothing of God shall e'er be thine

But who seeks Him, in the dark
and cold,

With heart that elsewhere finds no rest,
Some fringe of the skirts of God
shall hold,

Though round his spirit the mists
may fold,

With eerie shadows, and fears untold.

THE ANCIENT CROSS

“God at sundry times and in divers
manners spake in time past unto the
fathers.”—Heb. i. 1.

There is a long, green spit of land
That juts into a loch ; the sea
Not far off thuds upon the sand,
Or crashes where the red rocks be ;
But here the peace is very great,
Small brooklets murmur as they list,
And, green with oft-enfolding mist,
The hills stand round in quiet state.

The lady-birch, with drooping bough,
Shows graceful by the sturdy pine ;
And his red scales more ruddy glow
The more her silver branches shine ;
And here and there the rough-kneed oak
Spreads its sharp-dinted glossy leaves
Where the slow fisher, oaring, cleaves
Its shadow with a lazy stroke.

And on the spit of land a stone,
With lichen tinted and with moss,
Stands on the tufted grass alone,
Its face graven with a simple Cross ;
There is no word of pious lore,
Nor wreath, nor ring, nor ornament,
Nor sacred letters nicely blent—
A simple Cross, and nothing more.

Not other is the stone from those
That in the mystic circle stand ;
An unhewn slab, and yet it shows
New light risen on a darkling land ;
In monumental speech, it tells
The story of the ages gone,
The story of the Pagan stone
New-charmed with sacred Christian
spells.

Men had been giving blow for blow,
And wrath for wrath, and tears for tears,
And reaping duly grief and woe
Through the long tale of blood-stained
years :
Still, with the summer, long ships steered
Up the calm loch with Norsemen fierce,
Whose gleaming swords were sharp
to pierce,
And neither gods nor men they feared.

In vain the coracle was hid
In cove beneath the branching trees ;
In vain they practised rites forbid,
Or sought the hills, and shunned the
seas ;
The Viking came with brass-beaked
ship,
And wrath and sorrow came with him,
And many a shining eye grew dim,
And quivered many a smiling lip.

Lo ! then there travelled o'er the sea,
From the lone isle where saints were
bred,
A peaceful, unarmed company
Who brought good news of God, they
said :

They suffered much, yet did not grieve,
They laboured much, and wearied not,
They bore with joy a bitter lot,
And sang their hymn at morn and eve.

They sang about the dim grey seas,
And One that walked upon their wave ;
They sang about the streams and trees
In a far land beyond the grave ;

And when Norse axe, or wild kern's
knife,
Unpitying, smote bare head or breast,
They sweetly sang themselves to rest
With songs about the Crown of Life.

By suffering thus subduing wrath,
They conquered those who vanquished
them ;
And corn grew on the waste war-path,
And nets dried where the long ships
came,
And there was wealth where had
been loss,
And ringing bells for clash of swords,
And needing no explaining words,
On the old stone they graved a Cross.

They conquered ; yet for many a day
The fierce old spirit lingered still,
And the hot passion had its sway,
And the old war-gods wrought their
will,
And rites of fear and blood were done
Amid the mists, and on the moss ;
They had but scratched a shallow Cross
Upon the grim old Pagan stone.

Ah me ! and still we hardly know
The depth and glory of the Faith
That opens life to man by slow,
Meek suffering, patient unto death ;
We still are fain, with wrath and strife,
To seek for gain, to shrink from loss,
Content to scratch our shallow Cross
On the rough surface of old life.

And there it stands, the cross-charmed
stone,
On the green spit beyond the trees ;
It hears by night the faint sea-moan,
By day the song-bird and the breeze,
And Christian bells, and sounding trains,
And the hard grinding of the wheels ;
And now and then a pilgrim kneels,
And tells to it his griefs and pains.

THE ABBEY

"God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers."—Heb. i. 1.

Near by the river the Abbey stands,
Among old fruit trees, and on fat
green lands,

With a weir on the river to drive
the mill,

And cunning cruives at the salmon-
leap;

And the beeves on the clover are
fetlock-deep,

And the sheep are nibbling the grassy
hill.

'Tis now but a ruin, spreading wide

Broken gable and cloistered side

'Mong lichen'd pear-trees and Spanish
nuts,

Here a pillar, and there a shrine,
Or niche where its sculptured lords
recline:—

Long a quarry for walls and huts.

Oh, stately the Lady-Chapel there

Once reared its cross in the upper air

Near by the river among the trees,

And sweet bells rung, and censers swung,

And matins and vespers and lauds were
sung,

With solemn-chaunted litanies.

O'er the high Altar a meek face shone,

A Virgin-Mother and Baby-Son,

Fashioned by art beyond the sea;

And there, in linen or purple dressed,

A priest gave thanks, or a soul con-
fessed,

With a psalm of praise, or a bended knee.

And some would pore over vellum books,

And some would feather the sharp fish-
hooks,

And some would see to the sheep
and kine;

Some went hunting the red-deer stag,
Some would travel with beggar's bag,
And some sat long by the old red wine;

Some would go pleading a cause in
Rome,

And still found cause to be far from
home,

And near to St. Peter's costly door:

They were not all bad, and they were
not all good

Who wore the Monk's girdle and
sandal and hood,

But some of them padded the Cross
they bore.

Yet was the Abbey a fruitful stage

In the slow growth, and the ripening
age

Of the long history of man:

For beaming Virgin and Holy Child

Made many a fierce heart meek and mild,

And the mastery there of mind began.

The footsore pilgrim there found rest,

The heartsore too was a welcome guest,

And who loved books, got helpful store.

It is God who guides the world's affairs,

And ever life rises by winding stairs,

Screwing its way from the less to more.

He reads the story best, who reads

Ever to find some germinating seeds

Sprouting up to a nobler end,

And God's long patience working still

Through all the good, and through all

the ill,

And always something in us to mend.

From bud to bell the wild bee strays,

Seeking the sweets of the sunny days,

Probing deep for the honey-cell;

Yet well for his theft he pays the flower,

For he brings to the blossom a quick-

ening power,

And a richer life to bud and bell.

Narrow and poor was the old Church-life

As it prayed in its cell, amid storm and strife,

With scourgings many, and fastings new ;

It knew no letters, it spurned at Art,
It had no pleasures, and lived apart—

Doomed to die as the world's life grew.

But something of wisdom the Monk would know,

Something of gladness here below,
Something of beauty, and what it can ;

He was not sinless, and yet he brought
A larger heart, and a freer thought,

And a fuller life to the sons of man.

And we are a stage too—not the end ;
Others will come yet our work to mend,

And they too will wonder at our poor ways.

Ah ! Life is more than our sermons,
prayers,

Bourses, machineries, multiplied
wares—

Still the heart sighs for the better days.

Still is a feeling of something in me
Which yet I am not, and I ought to be,

Vaguely reaching for more and more ;
And the gain is loss, when I do not win

A larger life for the soul within,
And hopes of an ever-opening door.

A PARABOLIC DISCOURSE

“A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country.”—Luke xx. 9.

FIRST HEAD OF DISCOURSE

A stately mansion in its park
Stands fair amid the oaks and limes,

Throstle and ousel, cuckoo and lark,
And flowers and shrubs of many climes,

And stars and tides ring out the chimes,
Telling the seasons and the times.

And many guests there come and go,
And make themselves at home in it,

Some restless, hurrying to and fro,
Some lounging where the sunbeams flit,

Some with a curious craving smit,
Some with the laugh of careless wit.

All through the woods they hunt the game,

Or snare the fish in brook and mere,
They bake the wheat by the ruddy

flame,
Or roast the flesh of the fatted steer,

And draw from cellars cool the clear
Old wine that has ripened many a year.

This stately mansion is their inn,
Where many fret, and all make free ;

They set the tables to lose or win,
They tune the strings to dance with

glee :
Only their Host they do not see,

And many doubt if Host there be.

They think that He is far away,
And that the place is theirs by right ;

They think, if He were coming, they
Could bear the searching of His light ;

They think He is a dream of night,
That morn will banish from the sight.

But there are some grave men and wise
Who lead the guests to a silent room,

Wherein a golden volume lies,
And picture of One in youthful bloom,

Whose face a glory doth illume ;
And by His side are a Cross and Tomb.

And this, they say, is He who made
The great house 'mong the oaks and

limes,
And He is living who once was dead,

But far away in heavenly climes,
Where are no stars or tides or chimes,

Telling the seasons and the times.

And some of His guests He keeps for
bliss,
And some of them He keeps for gloom,
Some He seals with a loving kiss,
And some He stamps with the brand
of doom,
Some He saves by Cross and Tomb,
Meekly dying in their room.

These He loves of very grace ;
But those He leaves to die in sin,
Not evermore to see His face,
Nor ever hope of life to win :
For all the unbelieving kin
Wrath Eternal shuts them in.

And therefore all should bow the knee
At the glory of His might,
And glory of His justice see,
That surely doeth all things right ;
And so in Him should they delight
Whether He heal their hearts, or smite.

SECOND HEAD OF DISCOURSE

Once, pitying much their foredoomed
lot,
One came who gentle was and meek,
And burdened with long-brooding
thought,

And when he heard the wise men speak,
He deeply questioned them ; and they
Replied that he was vain and weak :

For this had been the faith alway
Of all the martyrs and the saints,
And all the ages stretching grey

Among the mountains of events,
Since Luther held the world at bay,
Or Paul was busy making tents.

Then silently he turned away,
And to himself the question put,
Searching the matter, night and day.

He did not argue nor dispute,
But prayed that God would lead him
right,
And sat and brooded still and mute,
Until he saw, as 'twere, the white
Thin sickle of the new-born moon
That yet holds all the round of light,

And all to him grew clear as noon,
And he came singing, like a bird
That sings for very joy its tune :

He deemed it the Eternal Word,
The glory and the life of Heaven,
Which his entrancèd soul had heard.

Lo ! I have sought, he said, and striven
To find the truth, and found it not,
But yet to me it hath been given,

And unto you it hath been brought.
This Host of ours our Father is,
And we the children He begot.

Upon my brow I felt His kiss,
His love is all about our steps,
And He would lead us all to bliss ;

For though He comes in many shapes,
His love is throbbing in them all,
And from His love no soul escapes,
And from His mercy none can fall.

THIRD HEAD OF DISCOURSE

Now, when they heard his words, they
rose,

And drove him forth into the night
With many bitter words like blows ;
And said that all would now be right,
That all their trouble now would cease,
And all the house be full of peace.

Yet in the dark and in the cold,
Out in the night among the dews,
He ceased not fresh discourse to hold
Amid the limes and elms and yews ;
It was "a still small voice," and yet
They heard it in the wind and wet.

He wandered there among the trees,
Or in the day, or in the dark,
And in the whistling of the breeze
They heard him singing like a lark ;
He is our Father dear, he cried,
And for the love of man He died.

And somehow, ever as he sang,
It seemed as if the great Book shone,
And mystic, pleading voices rang
About the rooms of vaulted stone,
And tears were on the pictured face,
And it was like a haunted place.

But they went on as they had done,
Still eating of the earth's increase,
Laughing or lounging in the sun,
And vowing that they had great peace ;
But no one heeded now the old
Strange story that the wise men told.

And yet the wise men were content,
And said that they had faithful been ;
And to the chamber door they went,
Though not by them the lights were
seen,
And read the Book and sang and
prayed,
And ate their viands undismayed.

FOURTH HEAD OF DISCOURSE

Ah ! which is truth ? The sovereign
Will

That worketh out a purpose vast,
Beyond our ken, to end at last
In severance of the good and ill ?

Or love that sweetly would enfold
All creatures in a large embrace,
And with the tears that blot its face,
Blot also out their sins untold ?

Dear story of the Cross and Book !
Is it our fabling hearts that speak
Fond dreams in Thee ? and shall we
seek,

In vain, through every field and nook

Of Nature for a witness true,
Affirming what thy words have said
Of Him who liveth, and was dead,
And liveth to make all things new ?

In vain, we try to reconcile
His hapless lot with love divine,
Who born with taint of lust or wine,
Is brought up in the lap of guile,

And gets no chance : his infant eyes
Look out on riot, vice, and hate,
And lies and blood, and horrors great,
And learn to look without surprise.

And yet I hold with them who say
That God is love, and God is light ;
But this is faith, it is not sight,
And waiteth, hoping for the day.

'Tis vain to wrestle with the doubt,
Or think to reason it away,
As well go wrestle with the grey
Cold mist that creeps the hills about.

Yet I can trust, and hope and praise,
Weary and dark as is the road,
Because I see the heart of God,
When on the bitter Cross I gaze.

O fellest deed of wrath and wrong !
Yet in thine evil-seeming slept
A large assurance, that hath kept
The Faith of goodness calm and strong.

ELIJAH

2 Kings ii. 2-11

It was the great Elijah in the chariot
of heaven,
With the horses of Jehovah, by a
mighty angel driven,
And the chariot wheels were rushing
'mid a mist of fiery spray,
Through glory of the night to higher
glory of the day.

It was the great Elijah—but meek and still was he,

For he trembled at the glory which his flesh was soon to see,

Going, girdled in his sackcloth, as the prophets were arrayed,

To the splendour of the Presence where the angels are dismayed.

Unwonted was the honour which his Master would accord

To his true and faithful witness, bravest servant of the Lord ;

Yet better had he borne, I trow, the sad, old human way

Of entering by the gates of Death into eternal day.

Aye, better had he borne to turn his face unto the wall,

With his kindred in their kindness gathered round him, one and all,

And to lie down with his fathers in the dust for some brief space ;

For the death, he once had dreaded, now appeared a tender grace.

It was the great Elijah ; and the form that would dilate

In the presence of King Ahab, and his Councillors of State,

Now bowed its head in lowliness, as if it dared not cope

With the terror of the glory, and the wonder of the hope.

Away from earth they travelled ; yet he somehow seemed to know

The road, as if his weary steps had trod it long ago :

And was not that the wilderness to which he once had fled ?

And that the lonely juniper where he had wished him dead ?

And was not that the cave where he had sat in sullen mood,

Until he heard the “still small voice” that touched his heart with good ?

And was not that the road by which from Carmel he had run
Before the chariot of the king about the set of sun ?

Yea, God was backward leading him to heaven along the path

Which he had erewhile travelled o’er in fear or grief or wrath,

That by its mingled memories his heart He might prepare

For the grandeur and the glory and the crown he was to wear.

Now, as they drove, careering, with the fire-flakes round the wheels,

And the sparks that rushed like shooting stars from the horses’ flashing heels,

Lo ! he was aware of a throng of men lay strewn along the road ;

And straight at them the angel drove the chariot of God.

“Stay, stay !” then cried Elijah, “rein up the fiery steeds ;

They will mangle those poor people lying there like bruised reeds ;

See, they stir not ; they are sleeping ; or their thoughts are far away,

And they do not hear the wheels of God to whom perchance they pray.

“Full oft have I been praying so, and chiding His delay,

And lo ! the work was done, or ere my lips had ceased to pray ;

For our ears are dull of hearing ; stay, and put them not to proof

Beneath the grinding of the wheel, and trampling of the hoof.”

“Nay, it boots not,” said the angel, “they are but the ghosts of those

Three hundred priests of Baalim who fell beneath thy blows

That glorious day on Carmel ; let them perish, as they cry

To the gods that cannot help them when they live, or when they die.

"Drive on, ye horses of the Lord,
across the weltering throng,
It is the great Elijah ye are bearing
now along,

Let them see him once again in the
triumph of his faith,
And hear the bitter mockery, and taste
the bitter death."

It was the great Elijah, the prophet
stern and grand,
Faithful only to Jehovah he in all the
faithless land,

Zealous even unto slaughter for the
God of Israel

'Gainst Ahab and the minions of the
Tyrian Jezebel.

But he answered, "Stay thy running,
and let me here descend,
For the Lord has brought me hither
surely for this very end:

Ah! this thing I had forgotten—day
of glory and of dole—
And I wist not what did ail me, but
its weight was on my soul."

Then he stepped down from the chariot,
looking oh, so meek and mild,
For the burden of the glory made him
humble as a child;

And he lifted up the prostrate head of
one and then another,
For the burden of the greatness made
him tender as a mother.

"Ye priests of ancient Sidon, and of
purple Tyre," he cried,

"I have heard a still small voice that
hushed the storms of wrath and pride,
And God who was not in the fire, and
was not in the wind,

Was in the still small voice that spake
to the unquiet mind.

"O worshippers of Ashtarothe, and
priests of Baalim,

I thought to please Jehovah, and I only
grieved Him;

I flouted you, and mocked you, and I
deemed that I did well
When I smote you in the name of Him,
the God of Israel.

"But He hath no pleasure in the death
of any man that dies,
He delighteth not in blood or smoke
of such a sacrifice;

Yea, not a worm is crushed, but the
writhings of its pain
Touch a chord of His great pity who
made nothing live in vain.

"He had patience with thee, Sidon,
and patience I had none;

For the art of Tyre, perchance, He let
the sin of Tyre alone,

Something He saw to stay His wrath;
but I would nothing see;

Ye were the Priests of Jezebel, and
hateful unto me.

"I did not think how hard it is to find
the way of truth;

I did not think how hard it is to shake
the faith of youth;

Yet, if I was walking in the light, the
credit was not mine,

But God's who in His grace to me
had made the light to shine.

"If ye were walking in the dark, and
I was in the light,

I should have brought its help to you,
and plied you with its might;

But I made my heart a flaming fire, my
tongue a bitter rod,

And I did not hear the still small voice
which is the voice of God.

"I said ye might have right to live in
Tyre beside the sea,

But not in high Samaria, or fertile
Galilee;

And I smote you there on Carmel, as
I thought, by His commands,

But I smote my own heart also when
your blood was on my hands.

"For the strength departed from me as
 the pity in me died,
 And in an unloved loneliness I nursed
 unhallowed pride ;
 And I wist there was none faithful on
 the earth, but only I,
 And sat beneath the juniper, and prayed
 that I might die.
 "For Jezebel and Ahab did as they
 had done before,
 And the idols were exalted, and
 idolaters were more,
 And the land was nothing better for
 the blood that had been shed,
 And I sat beneath the juniper, and
 wished that I were dead.
 "Then it was I heard the still small
 voice, and bowed me to the ground,
 Humbled by the gracious burden of the
 mercy I had found,
 But I may not enter into rest, or with
 the Lord abide,
 Till ye humble with your pardon him
 that smote you in his pride."
 Then, one by one, he bore them gently
 from the angel's way,
 And, one by one, he laid them down,
 and kissed them where they lay ;
 And he never was so human as in his
 meekness then,
 And he never was so godlike till he
 was like other men.
 And he said in yearning pity, "Oh that
 I might die for you,
 Hapless souls that are in darkness, and
 who know not what they do !"
 And the tearful eye was swimming, and
 he heaved a weary sigh ;—
 He was very near to glory with that
 great tear in his eye.
 And the angel in his chariot sat, and
 watched him toiling long,
 And the angel's face shone radiant, and
 he broke into a song ;

For the choicest songs of angels are the
 anthems that begin
 With the sorrow of a contrite heart
 a-breaking for its sin.

And ever as the prophet wept, the
 angel sang more loud,
 And his face was shining more, the
 more the prophet's head was bowed ;
 Until the task was ended, and the
 flesh was crucified,
 When lo ! they were at the gate of
 heaven, and the door was opened
 wide.

Lo ! they were at the gate of heaven,
 and there a mighty throng,
 Ten thousand times ten thousand, raised
 their shout, and sang their song,
 But the Lord remembered he was flesh,
 and downcast for his sin,
 And Enoch who had walked with God
 came forth to lead him in.

LITTERATEUR

NOTE

So he forsook the priesthood just
 in time,
 And only just in time ; for there
 had been
 Ominous whispers, here and there,
 about
 Doctrine unsound, unsettling, dangerous,
 In rural manses, and at cleric meetings ;
 In smithies too, and where the shuttle
 clicked,
 Sharp wits discussed him, and the
 ploughman even
 Ceased whistling in the furrow, brood-
 ing o'er
 The thoughts that came to him, and
 drove his soul
 From its old furrow into a fresh soil.

Unsettling and alarming! There was peace	Which stood in peril from the hand of one
While the tea-table gossiped, and the smith	Who should have stayed the ark. High Cardinals
Told his coarse stories to the laughing clowns	Bourgeon in all the churches; there red-stockinged,
(Heard also by the maids that bleached the linen	And crimson-hatted — here in sober black;
Upon the green hard by)—peace when the weaver	Now bald with age, now shaven to look like age
Talked treason with his thin and blood- less lips,	And gravity; and mostly portly men Of large discourse, and excellent taste in wines.
Starved into revolutionary dreams—	They cultivate the wisdom of the serpent,
And peace while men grew brutal as the steer	And leave the rest to play the harm- less dove,
They harnessed to their plough! Then all went well;	Fulfilling thus the scripture by division Of labour, as the modern law re- quires:—
There was no danger to alarm the Church!	You do the simple dove, as Christ enjoins,
But thought disturbs the world, and thought of God	And I will do the serpent. For the Church,
Unsettles most of all; for it is life, And only life can comprehend its force,	As a world-kingdom, they are worldly- wise,
Or guide it. 'Tis as lightning in the cloud;	Subtle diplomatists, far-seeing schemers Of crafty policy, yet often men Who would not sacrifice a dearest friend For its advantage, sooner than them- selves
We know not what, or where its bolt may strike,	Would bleed at the same altar; yet alas They offer sometimes, what is holier still,
But fear for the church-steeple, and ourselves,	That charity which is the Church's life For the world-kingdom which they call God's Church.
Nor dream there may be blessing even in it.	Men of long silence, they will seldom speak
Yet there are surely times when there is nought	Till they are ready to strike; and so they held
So needed as unsettling, just to get Out of old ruts, and seek a nobler life.	Many a quiet meeting, letting not A whisper of its purport from their lips,
Raban forsook the Church, whose service once	Only they looked more grave than customary,
Had been his fond ambition. But ere that	
There had been meetings of the cardinals	
At the headquarters, moved thereto by letters,	
Representations, visits, urging them That something must be done to save the Faith	

As they who have grave business on
their hands.

In truth, they wist not what they ought
to do :

The evil might be great ; but then
he was

So slight a man, so inconsiderable,
Unbeneficed, unpopular ; and to break
A fly upon the wheel was apt to rouse
Unreasonable laughter, and such men
Like not such mirth. And then as to
these views—

Who could pin down a shadow to the
ground,

And take its measure ? who could try
the notes

Of a wild bird by proper rhythmic
laws ?

Or say if the wind whistled by the
gamut ?

They understood not what he would
be at :

A mystic, vague and unsubstantial, true
To no laws that they knew ; but they
were sure

That he was vain and foolish, and
would melt

Like sugar in the mouth, and be forgot
Save by some sweet-toothed children.

Let him be ;

Contempt would kill that, like a nipping
frost,

Which, grown notorious, might live on
a while,

And work some mischief. They were
very wise,

The portly cardinals, and yet they
knew not

All that the future knew, and how
the truth

Works sometimes from without as from
within.

Meanwhile, he wist not what they
communed of ;

None spake to him of trouble in the air,

Of ill reports, of plans to wreck his
hopes,

If hope still clung to him ; nor any
brother

Came in a brother's love to him, and
said :

Lo ! we will reason it together ; then
God will give light perchance, and
thou shalt be

Saved from much sorrow, and I shall
be blessed.

They looked askance at him ; they
crossed the road,

And passed on the other side ; they
lifted up

Their eyes to heaven, and saw him
not ; or with

Broad, brazen stare they silently went on.
He noted them, but heeded not, or
thought

But how the herd sweep past the stricken
deer,

Or how the wild wolves, padding o'er
the waste,

Eyeing a wounded comrade, note how
soon

The time may come when they shall
lap his blood,

Or gnaw his bones. But nothing then
he knew

Of their complaints, or of the storm
a-brewing ;

He only thought that people had not
loved

His preaching, and would hear his
voice no more ;

Else had he stayed it out to fight
the fight,

For sound of trumpet and the clash
of swords

Roused in him joy of battle, even then
When hope of victory was none in him.

So, wotting not his peril, he forsook
The pulpit where they welcomed him

no more—

The wandering life that, weekly, pitched
its tent

In some fresh home, where children
laughed and sang,

And all the hopes that like the ivy
grew

Green about old church towers : and
sat him down

In a small garret with a new-made pen.

Once they complained his sermons were
like books,

Essays original and quaint, which men
Might read in print, and wisely meditate ;

And now they said his books did
somewhat smack

Of homely preaching, such as long ago
Spoke to the times. He brought a
sacred spirit

Unto the secular task, and called on
men

To follow lofty aims and noble deeds.
Even when he laughed at fools, his mirth
would be

Pitiful, and when he would edge his tool
Sharper to smite the wooden wit o'
the time,

Yet was it in some cause of righteousness,
Or large humanity, that might have
been

Theme of a prophet mocking at the
devil.

And thus he breathed into our common
life,

And round about the church, an atmo-
sphere

That changed them both, and loosed
their bonds, and wrought

As none might work within the Temple
gate ;

For oft the Church must learn from
those without

Who paste the prophet-broadside on
its wall,

Or sing their burden on the busy street.

SECULAR

Who once has worn the priestly robe,
and seen

The upturned faces with their look
of awe,

As unto prophet giving forth the law
Amid the hush which, even when

thought is lean,
Devoutly listens,—having ere while been

'Mong holy things within the altar rails,
Is fain to hide his head, what time

he fails,
And seeks his pulpit in a magazine,

Unfrocked of his own will. He
shrinks with fear

From buzzing critics carping at his wit,
And on the buried past he drops a tear,

Until he finds the secular life is knit
And braced by freedom, and is, haply,

more
Large and full than his life before.

CONTENT

Howe'er it be with some, the broad
highway

Is better than the priestly path for me ;
For when it was my task, from day

to day,
To do official pieties, and pray,

I think I might have grown a Pharisee,
Pumping my heart, when it was dry

as dust,
For words of faith and hope—because

I must.

Then are we at our highest, when we
touch

The Infinite and Good in worship due,
Bowing in lowly reverence to such

As we deem holiest, and trusting much
Because the holiest is most pitying too :

Nothing so nobly human as the quest
That seeks true man in God, and there

finds rest.

But he who all day handles sacred tasks,
While his thoughts travail with the
world, and he

Nor hopes to get from God the thing
he asks,

Nor yet to hide from God the heart
he masks

To others—how it wounds his soul to be
Praying-machine, until the day's chief
sin

Is the chief duty he has done therein !

I did not turn a Pharisee ; I fought
Against the perils that my life beset,
And when I felt no worship, wor-
shipped not,

And when my heart was merry, mirth
I sought,

Entangling jests like gay moths in a net,
And laughed, and made laugh, though
I saw, the while,

They fancied not a priest so given
to smile.

Be the road stormy, be it calm and mild,
Yet snares are spread there, pitfalls too
are dug :

The pious mother, longing that her
child

May keep his white robe clean and
undefiled,

Dreams of a peaceful parsonage and
snug,

Where the world comes not, neither
any snare ;

Yet world and flesh and devil, too,
are there.

Just past their teens, we task young
souls to do

What needs a large experience deeply-
tried ;

And oft I marvel they remain so true,
Freshening the old, and bringing forth
the new,

And with the growing life still grow-
ing wide ;

For the cloud-incense of the altar hides
The true form of the God who there
abides.

But now I do my work with hand
and head,

And do my worship with a separate
heart ;

With a good conscience earning daily
bread,

And by the Heavenly Father duly fed,
I keep the worship and the work apart ;
And yet the work has worship in
it too,

But willing service, not a task I do.

My heart is more at one, my soul
more calm,

My Sunday more a welcome joy
to me,

Whose rest is sweetened by the folded
palm,

The bended knee, and the uplifted
psalm,

While once it was a fretful troubled sea
Vexed by the thought of human praise
or blame,

And only partly lit by the Great Name.

DISCONTENT

Sitting apart,

I hear the murmuring tide of life,
Its onward rush, and foaming strife,
Yet bid my heart

String dainty words in fancies quaint,
And be content.

Lying abed,

I dream, with method in my dream,
And catch up any lights that gleam
Into my head,

And fondle a conceit, beguiled
As by a child.

Poring o'er books,
Dingy, old volumes, by the hour,
Which only I and moths devour,
My eyes find hooks
In each dim page, and I have peace
In their increase.

What would I more,
Since I have dropt out of the race,
But eddy in a quiet place
Beside the shore,
And make a play of life, and smile
A little while?

Yet now and then,
A something pricks me, canst thou see
The breaking waves that surge by thee;
And has thy pen
No service, but these fancies odd,
For man or God?

Ah! vexing heart,
Rebellious! fain to seek the fight,
Though broken all thy force and might,
Thou hast no part
In life, but with a patient will
See, and be still.

SUCCESS

I have done well, I said, for I have
found
My place in life, the work that I can do,
And in my garret, spurning the low
ground,
I can, at least, be manful, free, and true.

Nameless, I go about, and sometimes
hear
The whisper of a fame that is to come;
They wot not who I am, and I appear
All unconcerned with that low-gather-
ing hum.

It is like being dead, and hearing what
Verdict of history may one day speak;

And now I laugh, and now I wonder at
Myself, that I can be so vain and weak.

But when I think, here will I make
my nest,
Ah me! the nest unfeathered is and
cold,
But sticks and thorns whereon there is
no rest,
And never love its weary wings could
fold.

There is a little islet that I know,
Blue with forget-me-nots—a lonely spot,
And no bird nestles where their gold
eyes grow:
'Tis just a home of long forget-me-not.

So lonely and so barren is my lot,
Still dreaming, where the quiet water
sleeps,
To win a name that shall not be forgot;
And that is all it either sows or reaps.

A WALK

A clear, crisp, Autumn day. Autumn
is Scotch
And lingers lovingly among the hills,
Knee-deep in golden bracken, and
golden grass
That tints the moor, what time the
purple heather
Withers to brown, and golden pendants
hang
On the slim, drooping birch—the
golden time
Of all the Northern year.

You shall find spring,
Joyous with bursting life, in English
lanes
Where the May-blossom wafts from
straggling hedge
Its incense like a white-robed Thurifer,

While the meek violet, like a saintly
soul,
Hid in a green obscurity, breathes out
Its sweets, unseen, and the pale prim-
rose woos
The shadow at the foot of lush blue-
bells.
Green are the meadows there, and
green the leaves
Opening, with various shade, in chest-
nut whorls,
And feathery birch, and plane and
beech and lime,
And late ash-bud and oak—the many
tints
Like many colours, yet one flush of
green
From the young life o' the year.

But Autumn loves

The ferny braes, the brown heath on
the hills,
The lichened rocks, orange and grey
and black,
The harebell and the foxglove in the
shaws,
The brisk and nimble air upon the
moor,
The flying cloud that scuds across
the blue,
Its shadow hurrying o'er the sunlight
brow
Of the still mountain, and the sleepy
loch
Quivering as in a dream of coot
and heron,
Or leaping trout; thither the antlered
stag
Leads forth his hinds to water at the
dawn:
And life is at full pitch of beauty then,
When verging to its close.

That Autumn day,
I wandered forth alone, in sober ways
While yet the shadow of the houses fell

Around me, and the window-eyes
looked on;
Yet I was glad, for I had found my
work.
And when I reached the country, and
beheld
The loaded wains with the last harvest-
sheaves
Led homeward, and the reapers blithe
and brown,
And felt my feet among the rustling
leaves
By the wayside, and watched the
shining spikes
Of frost in shady nooks beside the burn,
I could not walk, but leaped, and
laughed at nothings
In very joy of life; for anything
Serves for a jest what time the heart
is gay.

So on and up I went, with tireless feet,
And fertile mind suggesting victories
My pen should win for me, as the
slow years
Ripened the powers which circum-
stance disclosed,
And critics now approved. I had the
trick
Of hoping to the full, and building up
Dream-palaces, creative, out of nothing,
Collapsing into nothing at a touch
Of adverse fact; and that day I
was in
The mood to make whole worlds, with
suns and stars,
And flowers and birds, and homes by
love made glad.

But crossing a waste moor, where hills
of slag
Rose bare, and sluggish pools were at
their feet,
Where no fish swam, but red lights
ever glowed,
I came upon a village mean and poor,

Which no one cared for, save to draw
much wealth
From seams of coal, and veins of
ironstone
That undermined it; one long string
of huts,
Ugly and dirty and monotonous;
And no bell rang there on the Sabbath
morn,
And only Death e'er spoke to them
of God.
Swart, stunted men were plodding
from the pits,
Weary, with little lamps stuck in their
caps
Instead of flower or feather; savage
children
Were skulking at the doors, but none
of them
Did run to meet their fathers, and be
kissed
And borne home shoulder-high; the
mothers, too,
Were fierce, and smiled not when the
men came home,
For they were weary, and not with
woman's work.
Oft had I seen the peasant from his
plough
Plod slowly home, but gladdened by
his girl,
Curly and sunny, chattering at his side,
And by the baby nestling on his breast,
And by the mother smiling at the door
With the milk-pail; and often watched
the fisher,
Hard-faced and weather-beaten, leave
his boat,
At early morn with children gam-
bolling,
Barefooted, on the sand, or leading
him
Home in the pride of love, with the
fresh spoils
Of the old sea; but such a sight as this,
So without hope or heart or any joy

I had not seen before: a place so dreary,
So God-forsaken in its ugliness,
Each house alike, the people too alike
Dismal and brutal; and the only spot
With any brightness was a drinking
house
Shining with glass and brass and painted
barrels.

Therewith the thought again knocked
at my heart,
Urgent and loud: Was thy life given
to thee
For making pretty sentences, and play
Of dainty humour for the mirthful
heart
To be more merry; or to serve thy
kind,
Redressing wrong? And all the long
way home
That thought kept ever knocking at
my heart.

LOST

Sick, sick at heart and in despair,
Through crowded street, and quiet
square
I seek my lost Love everywhere.

A while, with shamed and broken
mind,
I hid from her, content to find
Her shadow nightly on the blind;

Content to hear her even-song
Go up with tremulous note or strong,
Go up the angels' hymns among,

Meanwhile I stood beneath the lamp,
And fretted on the pavement damp
At the slow Watchman's patient tramp,

Or noted where the shadows flit
On quaint old gables, or a bit
Of carving by the moonbeams lit.

The shame of failure on me lay,
And led me on a lonely way,
Hoping for dawn of a new day.

Yet now the day has come, and lo !
It is like morning creeping slow
Into a blinded house of woe.

Gone ! and she has not left a trace !
And while I haunt the silent place,
Oh ! I am haunted by her face.

O fool and coward ! not to see
That love, which would have trusted
thee,
Must die if it distrusted be !

CHANGE

Ah ! to have lived at Love's high pitch,
And then fall back on level lines
Of commonplace ! to have been rich,
As one who ventures deep in mines,
And then to toil at hedge or ditch,
And dream of costly fares and wines !

Gone from my life the impassioned
strain
That gave it all its tender grace,
And now its gladness is the pain
That draws deep furrows on my face ;
But I can never stoop again
To the dull round of commonplace.

Another passion must knit up
These flagging energies of mine ;
No muddy water for my cup !
But fill it full with generous wine ;
Who knows what Love is, may not
sup
On that which is not still divine.

He who was caught up, as he said,
To the third heavens, and heard and
saw

Unutterable things, would tread
Earth, after, in a trance of awe,
Nor might he ever bow his head
To bear the yoke of meaner law.

I saw the people sad and dumb,
With none to utter their complaints,
But preached to of a world to come,
And damned because they were not
saints :

And there, I said, is work for some
Whose heart with hunger in them faints.

BAD TIMES

An evil time ! a time of deep unrest,
And thoughts that reached out for a
larger life,
When bread was dear, the poor were
sore distressed
And work was scanty, and the taxes
rife.

Often, at night, I walked about the
town,
When the broad moon was silvering
street and square,
And all the loathsome now was lovely
grown,
For only light and shadow brooded
there.

Stately and fair the gabled houses rose,
And hazy legend, or historic light
Clung to each winding stair, or murky
close,
And with the past day filled the present
night.

And in a dream of history I went
Along the centuries of pride and sin
That me o'ershadowed, till my heart
was rent
With pity of the sights I saw therein.

For often from the gloom and from
the cold
Where they lay shivering in a dusky
nook,
Gaunt faces glared at me, and children
told
Their misery in a wan and wasted look.

And pest and hunger there went hand
in hand,
Invisible but strong, and some went
mad,
While good men licked their lips, and
looking bland
Over their port, allowed the times
were bad.

NOW AND THEN

One rode amid a rabble throng,
And laid about him with a sword ;
His heart was high, his hand was strong,
Nor did he stint an angry word ;
"Ho ! lurdanes, earth is full of bread,
An ye will work for its increase,
But an ye idle here, instead,
'Twere better that your breath should
cease.

Get to the mattock and the hoe,
The distaff and the spinning-wheel ;
Ods life ! who will not work, shall
know
The bitter taste of cord or steel.
Away ! with crutch and beggar's
whine !

Away with ballad-singing rogues !
And lo ! ye shall have flesh and wine,
And hosen warm and leathern brogues ;
And there shall not be rags or debt,
Or hunger in the land, or cold,
If ye will only dig and sweat"—
But that was in the days of old.

One looked upon a wrathful crowd
That surged about the market square,

And with hoarse clamour cried aloud
The spawn of Tyrants not to spare ;
And from the throng he took his
way

Into a waste and desert land,
In loneliness to brood and pray,
And bring back order and command.
Then coming from the desert place,
Again the market square he trod,
With shining glories in his face,
And laws that had the seal of God :
"Behold," he said, "the gods
command

That ye shall keep these statutes good,
And they will give you fruitful land
To dwell in, and ye shall have food."
And they had faith, and writ the
laws

In letters large of gleaming gold,
To order every plea and cause—
But that was in the days of old.

But now this pinched and sunk-eyed
mob,
'Tis work they ask the Powers to
give,

Hating to filch or steal or rob,
Ashamed to beg that they may live.
But silent is the clicking loom,
And silent too the birring wheel,
The flaming forge is quenched in
gloom,

The mill is grinding little meal.
The ships are rotting in the dock,
The cage hangs listless o'er the mine,
The hammer rings not on the rock,
The spade rusts on the unfinished
line,

And gladly would they toil and sweat,
Without the taste of cord or steel,
And gladly keep the order set
By any law the gods could seal.
But I have only tongue and pen,
And neither force nor faith to hold
My way among the sons of men
As they did in the days of old.

HOW WE DID IT

Erewhile our forefathers, hating
 oppression,
 Swore a great oath that their blood
 they would spill,
 New-hefted scythe, issued plea and
 Confession,
 Scoured the old musket, and took to
 the hill.

Loomed in the front of them scaffold
 and halter,
 Hunger and weariness, battle and death,
 Only the mists of the mountain for
 shelter,
 Only the raven to watch their last
 breath.

Times were heroic then ; e'en the slow
 peasant
 Felt his heart swell 'mid the trumpets
 and spears ;
 And if our commonplace way is more
 pleasant,
 Yet we have lost the great soul of
 those years.

We held monster-meetings, signed
 tons of petitions,
 And snowed all the country with
 leaflets and tracts,
 Setting forth all our desires and
 conditions,
 And bristling with arguments, figures,
 and facts.

With weekly pennies, and working
 committees,
 And secretaries, and printing large,
 We knit together the towns and cities,
 And rallied the battle, and made our
 charge.

Heroes we were not ; they were not
 wanted ;
 Power now must yield what the people
 demand ;

But sometimes I laughed as our doings
 we vaunted,
 The work was so common, the words
 were so grand.

Yet what have the ages been slowly
 achieving,
 By slings, bows and arrows, and
 muskets and swords,
 But just that we now should be
 peacefully weaving
 Far mightier spells by the virtue of
 words ?

STORM-BIRDS

O creatures of the storm !
 Shrill birds that scream but when the
 shrill winds blow,
 And fish of monstrous form
 Which the long rollers on the sand-
 beach throw,
 And with the tangled wrack drift to
 and fro—
 You well I know.

O creatures of the storm !
 That creep out of your holes to meet
 the rain,
 Foul toad and slug and worm,
 And to your proper dark return again,
 When the sun shines, and merry birds
 are fain
 To sing amain !

Yet the storm also brings
 The Master to the helm the ship to
 guide,
 And deftly trim her wings,
 And shape her course amid the wind
 and tide,
 And so the best and worst are side
 by side,
 While storms abide.

RUMOUR

Open-mouthed Rumour ran from
street to street,
Telling of flour devoured by rats and
mice;
Telling of old stacked corn by wet
and heat
Wasted, while waiting for a famine-
price;

Telling of fortunes speculators made
Out of the miseries of the hapless poor;
Telling of mothers starved and lying
dead,
While babies gnawed their breasts
upon the floor;

Telling of men devouring grass and hay
To stay the hunger that devoured
their bones;
Telling how gamesome children now
would play
At funerals only on the paving stones;

Telling how soldiers did their sabres
whet,
And kept their horses saddled day and
night,
And primed their muskets, when the
people met,
Ready to quench in blood the cause
of right;

Telling of speakers threatened for true
words;
Telling of lawyers framing treason-
pleas;
Telling of harsh things done by angry
lords;
Telling of statesmen who were ill
at ease.

Many-tongued Rumour had a busy time,
And men were greedy for the tales
she bore,

And when she told of madness, sin,
or crime,
The worse the story they believed
the more!

O foolish world, be-rumoured of thy
wits!
How had a spark then set thee in a
blaze
Amid thy heats and chills and
trembling fits,
And turned to grief the glory of those
days!

TRIUMPH

Upon a day of triumph some will shout,
And set the bells a-ringing in the
steeple,
And fountains spouting wine for all the
people,
And lights in all the windows round
about.

They must have noise of cracker,
squib, and gun,
And at the market-cross with loud
hurrahing,
And shaking hands, and bands of
music playing,
They will proclaim that now the day
is won.

For me, I went home with a quaint
old book,
And shut me in to have a long night's
reading;
That was my payment, for my soul
was needing
Still waters in a restful, quiet nook.

Well; each man has his way, and this
was mine;
I could not care for fizzing squibs and
crackers,
Hallowing crowds, and empty boastful
talkers
Made eloquent by vanity and wine.

Tramp, tramp, I heard them marching
here and there,
With strutting bagpipe, or with noisy
drumming;
And when I hoped that surely calm
was coming,
Fresh clamours rose with rockets in
the air.

And at my door they paused a while,
and gave
A ringing cheer that set my heart
a-beating,
And flung their caps on high with
kindly greeting,
And slowly ebbed back like a broken
wave.

As they were glad, I let them have
their way;
As I was glad, I took my own good
pleasure;
And while they bawled and shouted
without measure,
I read old chronicles till break of day.

ENDINGS

NOTE

RARELY is life compact into a plot
Carefully laid, with deepening interest,
Dramatic unities, and characters
Entangled in a tragic Fate that works
To a foredoomed catastrophe, and melts
All hearts with pity. Unto most of us
There comes no great event for wind-
ing up
The story—only chapter broken short,
And, one by one, the snapping of some
thread,
Once twined with ours, making it full
and strong,
And now by loss enfeebling it, till life,
Grown thin and lonely, taps to its close

With lessening interest: a tragic tale,
And yet without a grand catastrophe.
So Raban judged it, when he summed
his days
In broken ends whereat the once full life
Oozed out, and he went on his way
alone,
Making no loud complainings, blaming
none
But himself only, and seeing good in
all—
Some touch of grace which showed
that they were human,
Or broken link which proved them
once divine.

RETROSPECT

The traveller in the desert lone
Looks back, regretful oft, to think
Of the sweet wells where he could drink,
Ere Fate had lured, or driven him on
Into a wan and wasted land
Of Wadys where the streams are sand.

And wistfully I, too, look back
From life, successful as they say,
That has no water by the way;
And it is water that I lack,
And there was water for my thirst,
When failure of my hope was worst.

There is no life so commonplace
But, if you search it, you shall find
A secret chamber of the mind,
Enshrining some fair sainted face,
Where worship still is done with tears
That freshen the grey dusky years.

That was its living water once,
Sweet-singing ever by the way,
And gleaming through its darkest day,—
The glory of its young Romance:
But oh, the desert wastes that spread
Where Love lives on, and Hope is dead!

OMEN

A fair white dove came to my window sill
 In the faint morning light,
 Preening its feathers with a pale pink bill
 Daintily in my sight,
 Nodding its head with pretty curtesy still
 To left and right,
 And then took flight.
 O fair, white dove, I meant to thee no ill;
 Why did'st thou then take fright,
 And vanish from my sight?

THE PUBLIC MEETING

I stood up to speak. At my back was
 a score
 Of broadcloth respectables solemnly
 stewing,
 For the vast hall was filled from the roof
 to the floor,
 And they swarmed, thick as bees, at
 each window and door,
 And I knew, at a glance, that a storm
 was a-brewing
 For my certain undoing.

Yet I stood up to speak. Almost
 under my feet,
 With pencil and notebook, were
 newspaper men;
 Some staid-looking working lads kept
 the first seat,
 Then students and snobs and the cads
 of the street,
 With a woman, perhaps, for each three-
 score and ten,
 And a child, now and then.

I was not ta'en aback, in the least,
 though I saw
 That the meeting was packed with a
 loud senseless mob,
 And standing near by, was a Limb-o'-
 the-Law

Who rubbed his sleek chin with a
 vulture-like claw,
 And a grin of conceit at the well-
 managed job,
 Which made my pulse throb.

So I stood up to speak. What a greet-
 ing I had!
 They hooted, yelled, whistled, and
 cat-called and groaned,
 Hissed, jeered at me, howled; cried
 "His throat sure is bad!"
 "Cough it up!" "Try an orange!"
 and "Was I not glad
 To address my dear friends?" Then
 they hooted and moaned,
 And sang and intoned.

Still I held my ground stoutly; re-
 plied as I could,
 At times ready-witted, and then got
 a laugh,
 But always good-humoured: I thought
 that their mood
 Would change by and by, when they
 saw that I stood
 With unruffled temper, and bore all
 the chaff
 Of that stormy riff-raff.

I had often stood there with a ringing
 hurrah!
 That greeted each hit; and I would
 not be beat,
 As I watched that long Limb-o'-the-
 Law looking grey
 While he signalled his Claque; so I
 stood there at bay,
 Though the Kentish fire rung out from
 three thousand feet
 With a fierce dust and heat.

But scanning their faces, I saw that
 the most
 Were brainless or beery, or big-jowled,
 with low

Brute foreheads, and felt that our cause
must be lost

With a white-chokered Chairman as
pale as a ghost,

And those broad-cloth respectables,
ranged in a row,

Full of dismal dumb-show.

Never mind ; I would try ; I had lungs
that would shout

Like a boatswain's, and ring with the
storm at its height ;

And I knew people liked me ; and half
of the rout

Was the clamour of friends who would
have me hold out,

Though I had to gesticulate till the
daylight

Broke on that stormy night.

So I plucked up my courage, and threw
back the hair

From my brow, scanned the Lawyer
from top down to toe,

Who gave back my gaze with an
impudent stare ;

Then I nodded, and smiled to my
friends here and there,

While I watched the dim crowd as it
swayed to and fro,

Seeming wilder to grow.

Now, a score of cocks crew, as to
welcome the day,

Then a wild caterwauling of cats in
the dark

Through the galleries ran ; then a
donkey would bray,

Or dogs yelped and howled in a
horrible way,

As if all the creatures shut up in the
Ark

Came to yell, scream, or bark.

After that arose a chorus of "God
save the Queen,"

With a tramping of boots keeping
time. How the dust

Rose in clouds, until hardly a face
could be seen !

How they roared themselves hoarse !
What a coughing between

Each verse as they sang out of tune !
for they must

Clear their throats of the rust.

It was all in the programme, of course ;
so I stood

And patiently edged in a word here
and there,

Now lost in the clamour, now half-
understood,

Now caught by the grinning reporters,
now good,

But as often bad ; and I did not much
care ;

It was spent on the air.

Should I try any longer ? What hope
there to speak

Words of reason to men who all reason
eschew ?

Highest truths to such ears were but
Hebrew and Greek,

And logic no more than the doors
when they creak,

And pathos like wind in a cranny that
blew ;

And they'd laugh at it too.

Leave the fools to the fate they are
fain to provoke !

They will know what it is in the
coming distress,

When they've damped down the
furnace, and cleared off the smoke,

And emptied the yards, and begin
then to croak

That taxes grow bigger as wages grow
less,

And the hard times press !

Let them be till the workshop is
empty and still,

And the clock on the wall does not
wag any more,

And the fire does not burn, though the winter is chill, And there's nothing to pawn, and there's nothing to fill The pale and pinched children that cry at the door, Or squat on the floor!	I have stood for an hour in the roar and the heat, I will stand till the day dash its light at my feet; But she shall not go home with her faith sinking low In the dear long ago.
Just then, looking down, my eye caught in the aisle A white oval face sweetly turned up to mine, Lips parted in eagerness, tipped with a smile As the great purple eyes beamed upon me a while, Or flashed on the crowd with an anger divine That warmed me like wine.	That moment a lull came, and stir near the door; Some were weary of shouting, some went out for beer; So I slept in a joke, setting some in a roar, Then a story that tickled their humour; that o'er, For one that still hissed, there were twenty cried Hear! And my way was all clear.
'Twas the face I had loved in the House in the Square! Just that look it had worn when her soul was inspired, As we read of the heroes of old who could dare The rage of the Demos, when madness was there, Or wrath of the gods, when their anger was fired, And their patience expired.	But my blood now was up: Ware! my Limb-o'-the-Law! Who would drown voice of reason with clamour and shout; With the laugh on my side now, at each hit I saw His cheek grew more livid, his vulture- like claw Twitch and clutch at the chin it went feeling about, As my wrath was poured out.
She had haunted my dreams, as I struggled to rise, She had cheered me in vision, what time I had failed, And now there she sat, and I saw in her eyes The fond love of youth without let or disguise, Till she wist that I saw it, and trembled and quailed, And the glowing face paled.	"'Twas the way of all Tyrants to gag our free speech, And the sign of a bad cause to shrink from debate; Let them look to their freedom when those who should preach Law and order, brought rowdies whom nothing could teach, Beered up to the lips, to roar like a spate, Drowning truth which they hate."
Then I said in my heart: "No, I will not be beat; She shall not regret to have trusted me so;	Then I tossed him aside, and took up the great theme Of Justice and Peace, till they thrilled at my words;

Yet I saw but the flush on her face,
and the gleam
Of the great purple eyes, as she drank
in the stream

That reasoned against the unreason of
swords

For man's law, and the Lord's.

"There was a wild madness abroad
in the air,

A longing for war which the rulers
had nursed ;

They had roused up the wild beast
that still had his lair

In the civilised heart, without cause
that would bear

The quarrel of nations ; and with a
blood-thirst

The land was accursed."

Then I sat down at last, 'mid a
ringing Hurrah !

And kindly pet names, and a hum
of content,

As the motion was carried ; and
hasting away,

I watched by the great door, and
stood in the grey

Watery light of the moon, till the last
of them went—

Very weary and spent.

I peered at each veiled face, but met
not her gaze,

Poked my head in each bonnet, but
she was not there,

Saw white figures point at me, heard
whispered praise,

And remarks on my pluck from a cab
or a chaise ;

But my heart sank within me in very
despair,

And I heard unaware.

I had seen her once more, but to lose
her again,

Through the storm she had burst like
a sunblink on me ;

And the joy of young Love flushed
my heart and my brain,

Like a fresh aftermath breathing sweet
after rain,

With all the birds singing on bush
and tree—

And now where was she ?

Could my eyes have played false ?
Could there be a mistake ?

No ; there was none else with those
wonderful eyes,

And there was none else in the world
that could make

My heart so to flutter and beat for
her sake,

And there was none else could my
soul so surprise

With dear memories.

Later on in the night I sat by the fire,
Alone, and in silence, my heart very low,

All the triumph gone out in a longing
desire,

As I saw the moon pale, and her
glory expire

In the dull drizzling rain falling steady
and slow,

When the wind ceased to blow.

I mused on the past ; on the House in
the Square,

On the hope that had clung to me all
the long years,

Unspoken, 'mid struggle and failure
and care ;

And now in the hour when I felt I
might dare,

She had come—she had gone—as a
phantom appears ;

And my eyes swam in tears.

Then there came to my door just the
faintest of taps,

Like the sound of small fingers that
timidly knock ;

"Come in"; I look up, and some
moments elapse
In stillness; and then again two or
three raps,
But never a movement of latch or
of lock
On the dull silence broke.

"Oh, the housemaid, of course; she is
wanting to bed;
No wonder, poor drudge!" So I
opened the door;
"No supper to-night, Jane," I wearily
said:
But it was not the housemaid I saw:
in her stead
Was the white oval face of the sweet
days of yore,
Gazing at me once more.

I breathed a long breath: was I
dreaming? or what?
Tongue-tied there I stood, as if bound
by a spell:
Then she dropped me a curtesy; still
stood on the mat;
Called me "Sir"; and "Felt sure I
had seen where she sat;
And she could not go home without
coming to tell
I did bravely and well.

"Her husband was waiting her out in
the street;
And oh she was proud to have heard
me that night;
Had her mother but witnessed my
triumph complete,
Who had always believed in me!"
Then, with a sweet
Smile, she glided away like a ghost
out of sight,
Ere my senses came right.

I had been quite bemazed: she had
curtseyed to me!

Called me "Sir"—me that would
have gone down at her feet,
And grovelled to kiss her wet frock,
or to be
Trod upon, for it had been an honour
if she
Should use me to carpet the stones on
the street,
And go dainty and neat!

Did she speak of a husband? I
groaned at the thought,
Sick at heart—I who loved so had
never once kissed
Her lips, save in dreams of a happier
lot;
And now all my loving and waiting
had brought—
What was it?—a vision that passed
ere I wist,
Like a vanishing mist.

I rushed out of door, up the street, and
then down,
But saw not a form in the dull drizz-
ling rain,
And heard not a footfall: the watch
of the town
Flashed his bull's-eye upon me from
toe up to crown;
"No, no one had passed"; so I crept
home again
In wonder and pain.

She had gone from my life, and its light
was all gone;
She had gone from my life, and I saw
her no more;
Drip, drip! let it pelt!—it was eerie
and lone;
So was I; and my heart lay within
me like stone;
And I cared not although the slow
pitiless pour
Should drip evermore.

MISGIVING

Has he done wrong, who, as the years
go past,
In loneliness, knowing it all in vain,
As he has loved before, to love again,
Brings to his home another bride
at last ?

Tender and kind, he cherishes his mate
More tenderly, the more he feels that
she
Gets not the perfect love which ought
to be
The guerdon and the bliss of wife's
estate.

For while he gently kisses her fond lips,
It is another face that meets his gaze ;
And he is stung by words of love
or praise
Which the truth known would darken
with eclipse.

O sorrow and shame ! that, while he
lies beside
The trusting one, he in the silence hears
His heart throb for the love of other
years,
And calm to her whom he has made
his bride.

REMORSE

Alas ! she did not long with me abide,
But pining slowly,
Like waning moon, she faded by my side
With melancholy,
And in our fifth spring, died.

I lifted up the face-cloth from her face ;
Upon its beauty,
Stony and still, yet lay the tender grace
Of love and duty,
And patient sorrow's trace.

O heart, I said, that gavest me all thy
wealth,

Of love's rich treasure,
And now by open service, now by
stealth,

Were't fain to pleasure
My sickness or my health ;

O faithful heart ! and yet thou had'st
from me

Observance only :
And still thy wistful, hungry look
would be

Like one who, lonely,
Gazes far out at sea—

Gazes far out to catch the hoped-for
sail

Film the horizon,
But only ocean, fretting in the gale
She sets her eyes on,
And hears the sea-mew wail.

I gave thee what I had ; but that was
not

What love expected ;
And when the fond heart for a fond
heart sought,

Thy love detected
The emptiness it got.

I took thy gold, and gave thee but my
brass ;

Though deep indebted,
When thou would'st look for more, I
let thee pass,

Or even fretted
That thou should'st sigh, alas !

I gave thee kisses, but my kiss was
cold,

And dainty dresses,
I did not grudge thee jewels set in
gold

For thy caresses,
As if they had been sold.

But that alacrity which doth prevent
 Our wishes even,
 That pleasure which on pleasing still
 is bent,
 That was not given,
 Which might thy soul content.

Thy heart for love was longing, and
 mine had
 No love to give it—
 A ruin haunted by a memory sad,
 That would not leave it
 Though truth and duty bade.

I called it sentimental, silly, wrong ;
 But yet it nestled
 The closer, and I think it grew more
 strong
 The more I wrestled,
 And I did wrestle long.

O pardon ! that I was not true to thee ;
 I tried to will it,
 And then the Past arose and wailed
 in me,
 Nor could I still it
 More than the sounding sea.

Ah ! to be true to thee, and false to
 her !—
 I could not do it ;
 Yet to be false to thee a baseness were,
 And I should rue it
 In life and character !

So life is ravelled almost ere we wot ;
 And with our vexing
 To disentangle it, we make the knot
 But more perplexing,
 Embittering our lot.

Farewell, true heart ; my sorrow stirs
 in me
 With no self-pity,
 But shamed and self-condemning. But
 I see
 The Holy City
 Opening its gates to thee—

Opening its gates to show thee all the
 truth

And all the folly ;
 The secret of the sorrow of thy youth,
 And melancholy
 Which touches me with ruth.

Farewell ; while thou had'st being here
 and breath,
 The truth was hidden,
 But now before the majesty of death
 My soul, God-bidden,
 Speaks out its better faith.

AFTER DINNER

Returned from Ballarat, where he
 had found
 Gold nuggets in the early rush, and
 more
 Golden experience, Martin Lusk, one
 day,
 Bearded and bronzed, dropt in upon
 the quiet
 Where I with treasured books—mine
 ancient friends—
 Was communing. At first, I knew
 him not,
 But soon the name recalled a form,
 a face
 From the dim past, that might perhaps
 have grown
 Into this son of Anak. So we fell
 A-talking, and I found his mind
 well stored
 With fresh, quaint pictures of that
 Digger-life
 Fighting with Death and Fortune,
 gambling, drinking,
 Thieving and pistolling, in dirt and
 squalor,
 Brutal-heroic, yet with touching gleams
 Of human tenderness, and gradual sway
 Of Law that, self-evolved, yet mastered
 self,

And rough-shaped that wild chaos. I could see This keen observer was a thinker too, Patient and tolerant, with the stuff in him For building up an empire. Being lonely In his hotel, and so conversible, I made him promise he would dine with me. Reluctant he agreed, reluctant came, And sat uneasy and silent, changed as much From the clear-sighted man I met at noon As from the bright-eyed youth of early days. Lusk, as a lad, was bold and confident, An only son, spoilt by a doting mother, Spoilt, too, by sisters proud of him, even spoilt By admiration of his college mates For a rich nature foremost in all games, Well forward too in studies and in speech, And yet not greatly spoilt by all their spoilings, Just frank and bold and sure of his position. But now he sat there, like a bashful girl At her first ball, blushing, and hardly spoke Save yea and nay, until we were alone. Then I: What ails you, Martin? What is wrong? Have we done aught to vex you, that you sit Dumb as a moulting raven? My home-bred girls, Untravelled, when they heard that you were coming, Donned their best muslins, and their gayest ribbons, Meaning to show their best, and talk their best,	And listen at their best. For they were all Eager to hear of pouchèd kangaroos, And duck-billed quadrupeds, and great emus Piling their eggs amid the sandy scrub, Black fellows, and the pig-tailed Chinamen, Bush-rangers, and the cradling and the crushing, And nugget-finding in the deep-delved loam, And other strange adventures of your life, As they romanced it; for the less they know, The more their fancy bubbles up and glitters. Yet there you sat, and stammered curt replies As frightened at their feather-heads. They'll vow That my old friends are stupid as myself: And oh, if they had seen what you had seen! If girls might only do what men may do, They would have tongues to tell it. Nothing ails me, He said; I did not know I was so rude: But coming from our rough unmannered life Among a group of happy girls like yours, Free in their innocence, is like the passing, Sudden, from dark into the blaze of noon; Your eyes blink and are blinded. It is long Since I have sat beside pure-hearted maids; And, listening to their words, my thoughts went back To dear old times; I seemed to hear again,
--	--

Dreamily, echoes of old fireside mirth,
And chatter of the table. Was I
rude?

I did not mean it. Half I envied you,
And half I feared that some ill-sorted
word

Of mine might break the charm. 'Tis
strange that we

May wallow with the swine, and grunt
with them,

Till those fair customs which were
native to us,

Grown unfamiliar, make us pick our
steps

In fear and silence.

Laughing, I replied
It was the last thing I'd have dreamed,
that he

Who, like a young Greek strong in
grace of mind

And manhood, used to fire young
maiden fancies,

While he himself was cool amid their
tremors,

Should sit abashed with home-bred
girls.

This led
To talk of College days and College
friends—

How one was mousing in a drowsy
manse ;

Another loud on platforms, half a priest,
Half demagogue, who played on

prejudice
With evil skill ; another, wigged and

gowned,
Bade fair to lead the Bar, and win

the Bench ;
And this, a kindly humcrist whose

speech
Was charming to the lecture-hearing
Public :

Some doctored west-end patients, some
the east ;

While some were dead, and others
worse than dead,

Turning up, now and then, in rusty
black

And dirty linen, rubicund of face,
Begging a paltry loan. We wondered

much
How the world-school reversed the

classic school,
And jumbled reputations ; fancied what

If, by some chance, another pair were
met,

That evening, in the bush, beneath
the Cross,

Or Indian dusky city, or London club,
They might of us be saying, as we

of them ;
Then we sat silent, musing for a space.

Then he : What came of Muriel
Lumisden ?

You used to haunt the widow's house,
I think,

With the fair daughters. What a flirt
she was !

And how she kept a score of silly lads
Dangling about her, every one quite

sure
He was the favoured, and the rest

were gulls !
Flirting came natural to her ; you could

see it
In every movement, every dainty curl

And fold of her black hair, in every
tone,

And glance and turn of the eyebrows,
and in all

The gesture of her lithe and supple
beauty.

To flirt was in the marrow of her bones ;
Even as a child she'd make eyes to

her doll ;
And just to keep her hand in, I have

known her
Beam on the butcher's boy a winning

glance
That sent him half-way heavenward

to his calves.

And yet there have been times when
she has seemed

A noble creature to me, all compact
Of womanly grace, with heart that
answered true

To every noblest impulse, and inspired
High-souled enthusiasm, till I have felt
I could have been content to do
some deed

That she would smile upon, and then
to die,

Keeping that smile for ever. How
she fooled us!

Yet oh how beautiful she was! those eyes
Melting with tenderness, or flashing
scorn

At any baseness, and those lips for all
Emotions eloquent! But such a flirt!

Hearing this passionate strain, which
had been lying

In wait for opportunity, I think,
All through the night's discourse, the
storm broke out

So unexpectedly, I called to mind
Some passages between them, and
the talk

That buzzed about them when he
went away—

How people said that she had wrecked
a life

Of splendid promise; how they pitied
him,

All blaming her, and yet they nothing
knew,

But that he loved, and that he loved
in vain,

And that he wooed, but had not won
her hand,

And that he rushed off, when his luck
had failed,

To the far ends o' the earth. Musing
on this,

And on his passionate upbraiding now,
I marvelled how he kept this open
wound

Rankling, unhealed, through all the
changeable years,

Wronging himself and her. What
should I say?

Better the old pain Custom helps to
bear?

Or the fresh anguish which the truth
will give?

So my mind balanced it. But I
resolved;

Better the truth restoring the old faith,
Even though it shame and break him.

Then I said:

Poor Muriel! so you have not heard
her story:

And you have held her but a wanton
flirt,

Heartless, and with her beauty break-
ing hearts;

So high an inspiration, yet so mean
A nature too! Well; maybe; only
flirts

Have not such souls as make one feel
one's-self

Little beside them—as a rule, at least.

And Muriel who, you say, was such
a flirt,

Rebuked me by the greatness of her
soul,

And of her sorrow. Shall I tell you
what,

I fear, may pain alike by gain and loss?

Then he: What mean you? Loss
is long since lost,

And gain can never be from her to me.
You knew her not as I did. What

remains

When bubbles burst i' the hand? not
even the glitter.

Is she a maiden still, and fancy-free?

Why, so am I, and free of her for
ever.

Is she a widow? I should gain a loss,
Indeed, to be her second. Is that your
riddle?

Or is she mated to a life-long sorrow?
What else could come of such a way
as hers?

Listen, I said: You were not gone
a year

When one came from New Zealand,
who had been

Sheep-farming in a patriarchal way
To win his Rachel, long since won
to love,

What time the lad was schooling at
her father's.

A fine young fellow, cheery as the spring
At pairing time, when songs are in
the woods,

And in the air, and in the furze and
broom;

Manly and kindly too, and full of trust
In Muriel, though she went on as before

With speech and smile and charm of
witching beauty,

And winning manner; but behind the
scenes

They knew each other, and he knew
her love

Was his alone. He liked to see her
worshipped,

Being proud of her, and sure of her.
Perhaps

She liked, too, being worshipped; who
can tell?

You say she was a flirt—and you
knew best:

I tell but what I saw. Well, by and by,
The wedding came, and every one

was bidden,
And every one was there of her old

friends,
Or lovers, and the joy was very great.

But from that moment she became to all
The staidest matron, with a kindly

distance
And dignity of noble womanhood

Hedging her round. It seems that
he had said

She must not play the nun, when he
was gone,

And sit apart, as ticketed "Engaged,"
But take life as it came, like other girls,

Not making him, far off, a haunting fear,
A shadow on the sunshine of her days,

But being joyous in her truth to him,
Which was her freedom; so would

he be glad,
Thinking her glad.

A happier man than he
Now there was none, nor yet a brighter

home
Than that she made him, with her

pretty ways,
And pretty babes, and large intelligence.

Pshaw! he broke in; of course, a
blessed pair

Of doves; the usual fashion; haunted
they

By no regrets for broken lives, the while
They twain sat cooing. Pass to some-

thing else;
It does not interest me—'tis all so

common.
Tell me about yourself, for you alone

Have made a name that even our
wild lads

Have kindly in their mouths.
But I: Nay, you

Must hear me out, seeing I have
begun—

There came a day when he must go again
Back to his flocks: there had been

summer droughts
That parched the grass, and heavy

winter snows,
When many weaklings perished in

the drift;
And over all the Colony a cloud

Hung lowering, for the Maori
threatened war,

Fenced his strong Pah, and sent his
fighting men

To waste and burn and stealthily to kill

So they went off together : at first
 he urged
 That she should stay behind, for war
 was ill
 To face, with wife and children in
 the rear
 Plucking your heart, and savages in front
 Who had no law or pity : she would find
 It hard to be alone i' the bush, and
 quake
 For her dear babes at every whisper-
 ing wind,
 Or rustling leaf, dreading the cunning
 foe.
 A year or two, and all would right itself,
 And he would sell his run, and live
 at home
 With nought to do but love her.
 Thus he spake
 In reason and right feeling, though
 his heart
 Was sore at parting. But she answered
 him,
 With the great heart which used to fire
 our youth :
 If war were coming, he would better
 fight
 That his wife bound his sword on, and
 was near
 To bind his wounds, and to call pitying
 thoughts
 Up in his mind, amid the storm of wrath,
 For savage women wailing in their
 kraals ;
 Exile would be to part her now
 from him,
 And home was just where he was ;
 for herself,
 She would not lose a year of happiness,
 Nor give a year of loneliness to him,
 For worlds ; and life was there where
 duty was,
 Not elsewhere ; and their God was
 also there,
 I' the bush as in the city. So they sailed
 In a great ship crowded with emigrants,

That down the Mersey dropt with
 favouring breeze,
 And ringing cheers upon the crowded
 wharf,
 And blinding tears upon the crowded
 deck,
 And many hopes, and many a sad regret.

 But in the night she, bearing down the
 Channel
 Through a thick fog, struck on a hidden
 rock,
 Yet in a quiet sea. The sailors thought,
 With the next tide she would be floated
 off ;
 And many went to sleep again, scarce
 heeding
 Whether she sank or swam, if they
 might rest,
 And sleep and dream of home. But
 by and by,
 The Master grew uneasy, muttered
 somewhat
 Of cranky ships that scarce would float
 in ponds,
 Dry-rotten in the docks—of useless
 boats
 That were but painted tinder ; and one
 heard him
 Murmur a prayer for wife and babes,
 the while
 He paced the deck alone, and resolute
 Issued his orders. Then a whisper went,
 Gloomy, that she was leaking, and
 would soon
 Break up amidships ; but as yet there
 was
 No panic, for the land was not far off.
 But as the day broke, eerie, on the fog,
 The timbers 'gan to crack, and great
 seams yawned,
 And with the rushing tide the terror rose.
 Then hands unhandy loosed the painted
 boats,
 And swamped them ; and from near
 four hundred throats

A cry rose to high heaven—a pitiful cry
Of anguish that might touch the heart
of Fate,
As to and fro they reeled, and wrung
their hands.

Muriel stood with her husband and
her babes,
Calm, on the poop. She saw the dim
grey sea
Deceitful, and the shore loomed through
the mist,
Uncertain, for there was no gleam of
light
From fisher's hut or farm ; a lone waste
land
Of unthrift and neglected husbandry,
Where neither glebe nor sea was
harvested.
Then, holding fast her little ones, her
face
Just a shade paler—it was always pale—
She said in a low voice : You can swim,
Malcolm ;
The shore is near, I think a sandy shore
By the dull thud o' the waves ; could
you not save
Some mother and her child, setting
example
Others might follow? Oh, we're not
afraid,
My little ones and I ; God cares for us ;
And you will come too ere the danger
comes.
The Captain says the ship will float
an hour
At least, and it is misery to see
Those faces, and to hear the bitter cries.
Nay, not us first ! but speak a word
to them,
And show them what to do ; we can
be still,
But they are frantic, and their madness
works
Their ruin ; we will wait in patience
here.

Try, dearest ; you are strong and brave ;
but yet
Be not too bold, your life is all to us.
Oh, can God hear that cry, and help
them not ?

Fain would he still have borne her first
to land
With her two boys, but that she would
not hear of.
Thrice, therefore, from the ship he
swam ashore,
Burdened with child or mother, or
with both ;
And thrice again he left to seek the ship,
Strong swimmer borne up by his work
of pity,
For nature makes the brave heart
strong to save.
And, at the next time, Muriel from
the poop
Lowered the children to his loving
arms,
Her great eyes swimming in the
pride of him
And love of them, until she hardly
saw
Aught else, or heard a warning cry ;
and then,
Just as he, confident and cheerful, held
The children, and was waiting for
her coming,
A spar fell from the falling mast,
and smote
Him smiling up to her, and with a cry,
And flinging up his arms, before her
eyes
He sank with their two babes. Yet
she was spared
A tragic agony by tragic fact,
For the great ship that instant brake
in twain.
In death they were not separate ; and
soon
The quiet waters, smiling in the sun,
Rippled where they had been.

Here Martin rose,
 Pale as a ghost, and shivering as a reed,
 Alone in withered Autumn, that is
 smote
 By sudden gust of storm.
 And I have railed,
 He gasped, at such an one as this !
 for years
 Have rated her and called her
 worthless flirt
 Who broke my worthless life ! have
 quoted her
 To lads who still had faith in truth
 and love,
 To cure them of their folly, and
 have held
 Myself the one wise man ! O God,
 my God !
 To have so wronged the woman that
 I loved !
 To have so 'stranged my nature from
 all love !
 To have so grossly slandered truth
 and love !
 God's beautiful one !—My broken
 life, forsooth !
 O poor self-pitying fool ! But lost
 is lost ;
 And this is gain though it be shame
 to me,
 Sorrowful gain by loss of evil thought,
 And love restored ; yet better so
 restored
 Amid my self-contempt, than as before
 Blurred in my self-conceit. O Muriel,
 yet
 I loved you through it all—a hateful
 love !
 But clinging to thee, seeing no one
 worthy
 Save thee, and thee unworthy, and
 with this
 So worthless love still wronging thee !
 —Good-night !
 I thank you, friend ; yes, you have
 done me good ;

There's healing in such sorrow ; but
 to-night
 I could not meet your girls ; I have
 done wrong
 Unto all women by my thoughts, and
 dare not
 Look in their eyes. And I must
 be alone :
 Beg my forgiveness ; I must be alone ;
 God help me ! I will to the old
 seashore,
 And hear the dull waves thudding on
 the sand
 As my thoughts break in me. O
 Muriel !—
 With that he gave my hand a silent
 grip,
 And gulping something down, pulled
 his hat low
 Over his brows, and strode into the
 dark.

 Alone, alone, I fell into a strain
 Of musing melancholy,
 Recalling, with keen sense of shame
 and pain,
 A man whom, living, I had reckoned
 vain,
 And to his calling holy
 Untrue, until I read, with blinding tears
 Which give clear sight, the story of
 his fears
 And clings unto God through
 weary years,
 Till peace came slowly
 To him grown meek and lowly.

 And I have sinned against a soul, I
 said,
 Noble and good and true,
 Whom God has gathered with the
 blessed dead,
 And put the crown of glory on his
 head,
 And I am humbled too :

But by this shame, O Lord, thou
teachest me,
He only walks aright who walks with
Thee,
Meek, in the judgments of that Charity
Which unto all is due,
And never heart shall rue.

STRAY LEAVES

NOTE

RIDING one day from Cairnoch on
the hill
Across the moor, Dick Ostler flicked
the ear
Of the brown mare, then jerked his
elbow and thumb
To bid me note a rounded hill that lay
Well to the setting sun, grotesquely
planted
With various forest trees—oaks, elms,
and pines.
Upon the lower slopes were hollow
squares
Just touching each a corner of the
other,
And in the bay between, a single tree
Or little group, but on the heights
above
Were solid masses, interspersed with
some
Carelessly strewn about.
“Queer woodcraft that,”
Dick Ostler said; “and yet I planted
them.
You see, our last lord went a soldiering
In his hot youth, and brave enough he
looked,
Though not much of a soldier—that
needs headpiece;
And coming home he took to forestry
When I was in my teens. He said
the Duke
Ordered the battle so at Waterloo,

And I must range them like his
regiments,
Though all the country laughed at
him. Ere long
He went to Parliament and made a
speech,
Although he was no Senator—that too
Needs headpiece; and he wanted me
to plant
The speakers and the members as
they sat
To hear his oratory; but that I would
not;
And that was how I took to horses,
sir,—
Me who had lived in forests all my
days,
And loved the trees, and knew their
forms and times,
And every sound of every swinging
branch
When the wind blew; and I must
handle brutes!
Because my lord would have it he
must serve
The nation fighting, though he was
no soldier,
Or parliamenting, though he could
not speak!
If he had just believed that God
made some
To stay at home, and see the farming
done,
And look to cottar’s houses, and
consort
With neighbours on the market-days!
But he,
He was my lord, and must as other
lords,
And would have writ his foolish life
in trees
Sprawling about the estate for folk
to laugh at.
That’s how I took to horses.” Then
he gave
The Brown another flick on the left ear,

And screwed his face into a look of
strong
Disgust.

I laughed, and vowed I did not
wonder

At his displeasure ; but he set me
musing :

Had not my old friend writ his life
likewise,

Planting along its paths a little border
Of verses like so many daisy-flowers

In memory of his failures. He was not
A preacher, though he writ some
sermons, nor

A politician, though he joined a party,
And did it service. Better sure for
him

Had he believed God makes some
men to write,

And brighten life with gleams of
better life,

Or oil its wheels with humour. So
it seemed

To me, when turning over articles,
Reviews and essays, and the odds
and ends

Of verse, that lay among them all
confused,

Whereof some samples follow, like
the thrums

Remaining when the web has been
wrought out.

MISS PENELOPE LEITH

Last heiress she of many a rood,
Where Ugie winds through Buchan
braes—

A treeless land, where beeves are good,
And men have quaint old-fashioned
ways,

And every burn has ballad-lore,
And every hamlet has its song,
And on its surf-beat rocky shore
The eerie legend lingers long.

Old customs live there, unaware
That they are garments cast away,
And what of light is shining there
Is lingering light of yesterday.

Never to her the new day came,
Or if it came she would not see ;
This world of change was still the same
To our old-world Penelope :
New fashions rose, old fashions went,
But still she wore the same brocade,
With lace of Valenciennes or Ghent
More dainty by her darning made ;
A little patch upon her face,
A tinge of colour on her cheek,
A frost of powder, just to grace
The locks that time began to streak.

A stately lady ; to the poor
Her manner was without reproach ;
But from the causeway she was sure
To snub the Provost in his coach :
In pride of birth she did not seek
Her scorn of upstarts to conceal,
But of a Bailie's wife would speak
As if she bore the fisher's creel.
She said it kept them in their place,
Their fathers were of low degree ;
She said the only saving grace
Of upstarts was humility.

The quaint, old Doric still she used,
And it came kindly from her tongue ;
And oft the " mim-folk " she abused,
Who mincing English said or sung :
She took her claret, nothing loath,
Her snuff that one small nostril curled ;
She might rap out a good round oath,
But would not mince it for the world :
And yet the wild word sounded less
In that Scotch tongue of other days ;
'Twas just like her old-fashioned dress,
And part of her old-fashioned ways.

At every fair her face was known,
Well-skilled in kyloes and in queys :

And well she led the fiddler on
To "wale" the best of his strathspeys ;
Lightly she held the man who rose
While the toast-hammer still could
rap,
And brought her gossip to a close,
Or spoilt her after-dinner nap ;
Tea was for women, wine for men,
And if they quarrelled o'er their cups,
They might go to the peat-moss then,
And fight it out like stags or tups.

She loved a bishop or a dean,
A surplice or a rochet well,
At all the Church's feasts was seen,
And called the Kirk, Conventicle ;
Was civil to the minister,
But stiff and frigid to his wife,
And looked askance, and sniffed at
her,
As if she lived a dubious life.
But yet his sick her cellars knew,
Well stored from Portugal or France,
And many a savoury soup and stew
Her game-bags furnished to the Manse.

But if there was a choicer boon
Above all else she would have missed,
It was on Sunday afternoon
To have her quiet game at whist
Close to the window, when the Whigs
Were gravely passing from the Kirk,
And some on foot, and some in gigs,
Would stare at her unhallowed work :
She gloried in her "devil's books"
That cut their sour hearts to the quick ;
Rather than miss their wrathful looks
She would have almost lost the trick.

Her politics were of the age
Of Claverhouse or Bolingbroke ;
Still at the Dutchman she would rage,
And still of gallant Grahame she spoke.
She swore 'twas right that Whigs
should die
Psalm-snivelling in the wind and rain,

Though she would ne'er have harmed
a fly
For buzzing on the window pane.
And she had many a plaintive rhyme
Of noble Charlie and his men :
For her there was no later time,
All history had ended then.

The dear old sinner ! yet she had
A kindly human heart, I wot,
And many a sorrow she made glad,
And many a tender mercy wrought :
And though her way was somewhat
odd,
Yet in her way she feared the Lord,
And thought she best could worship
God
By holding Pharisees abhorred,
By being honest, fearless, true,
And thorough both in word and deed,
And by despising what is new,
And clinging to her old-world creed.

WAGSTAFF

With supple form, and radiant face,
And shock of swirling Auburn hair,
And brown plaid, worn with careless
grace,
He sauntered, loitering everywhere ;
For his swift-glancing eye must look
On all that met him by the way,
And every street was like a book
Which he could read the live-long day :
Nor sun nor moon nor star nor chime
Set punctual tide for him or time,
For all his habits were at strife
With orderly mechanic life ;
And in the Mart when he was seen,
Where sharp wits drove their bargains
keen,
His wayward thoughts were oft astray,
Brooding with Ruskin on St. Mark's,
Or dreaming on some broomy brae
Among the linnets and the larks.

No flower that in the garden grows
 But all its way of life he knew,
 No wilding in the green hedgerows
 But he could tell its story true ;
 And where birds nestled, how they
 sung,
 And where to find the honey bees,
 What varying notes were heard among
 The beech-woods and the stiff pine
 trees,
 All sights and sounds of Nature, well
 Their nicest difference he could tell ;
 For where the careless footstep trod
 He saw the glory and power of God.
 All beauty thrilled him like the kiss
 Of young love in its early bliss ;
 And so his life had great delight,
 For beauty everywhere he met ;
 A moss would make his eye grow
 bright,
 A cowslip or a violet.

The music of the ancient days,
 The pictures of the age of faith,
 When Song was still the voice of
 Praise,
 And Worship had its vital breath
 In forms of loveliness divine—
 Virgin and babe of tender grace—
 He would be drunken as with wine
 On holy hymn or saintly face.
 And oh to hear him (when he met,
 With some new loan, an ancient debt)
 Come back to Keats's picture-words
 Like flowers and fruits and singing
 birds ;
 Or Wordsworth's touch of Truth,
 who saw
 All nature wrapt in love and awe ;
 Or Shelley's strains, like lark unseen
 In mystic sweetness rippling on ;
 Or the choice words, and vision keen,
 And perfect art of Tennyson !

He had large wealth of curious lore,
 And freely would his wealth dispense,

And still his speech suggested more
 Than lay in its familiar sense ;
 And we who gathered round him
 young
 And eager, inspiration caught
 From broken fragments which he sung
 Or glimpses of far-reaching thought.
 In letters some, and some in Art,
 And some in Science took their part ;
 But all ascribed to him that they
 Had found their true life and its way
 Meanwhile he struggled lonely, poor,
 Indebted, slighted, and obscure,
 And went through darkness into rest
 But yet his thoughts with us abide ;
 He lives in us, when we are best,
 He is but changed and multiplied.

PEPPE

Ugly was not the word for Peppe :
 His cheek was scarred with a crimson
 gash,
 He had squinting eyes, and a limping
 step,
 And a long lip furzed with a re-
 moustache,
 Sharp-pointed teeth, like a saw, and
 black
 Finger-nails, like a vulture's claw,
 And all the skin of him spotted and
 slack,
 Like a mouldy old parchment deed
 of the law.

Yet never a maiden had silkier curls
 Scented and glossy and soft as a dove
 And never silkier voice among girls
 Lisped, in soft accents, of beauty and
 love ;
 Oiliest curls, and the oiliest speech
 Talking the wildest thoughts ever
 heard—
 Thoughts of a kind it were fitter
 screech,
 Dropt like the notes of a singing bird

Softly he spoke about fell Revolutions,
Of Rank, Rule, and Title and Capital
gone,
Swift overthrow of our old institutions,
And blood from the Barricades splash-
ing the throne,
Burning of churches, and burying gods,
Treating the priests like the rats in
their holes,
Ruin of all our old life with its modes
Of building up order, and saving of
souls.

Sometimes he went off, when little
expected,
But to come back, when as little desired,
Now looking haggard and lean and
dejected,
Tricked now in garb that he plainly
admired ;
Leaving, he went where no seeking
could find him,
Returning, no care could escape from
his view,
And when he went, he left trouble
behind him,
And coming back, he brought trouble
anew.

For, be his luck what it might, we
were sure
Storms would be brewing the moment
he came,
Chills would be falling on friendships
pure,
Doubts would be cast upon some
honoured name :
Mischievous followed wherever he went,
And some bright eyes would with
tears be dim ;
And yet he looked smiling and innocent,
And we never could bring the thing
home to him.

Last time we met was in seventy-two,
Just when the mad Commune had burst ;

Jewelled and furred like a Rotterdam
Jew,
Hardly I knew the fellow at first ;
But he came up with a smile, and a look
Nothing could ever the least embarrass,
Saying, " Ah ! here is your wished-for
Book,
And I picked it up at the siege of Paris."

Eh ? was I wrong to give him his price,
Instead of giving him straight in charge ?
A book so scarce it was only twice
Offered for sale to the world at large !
Ah ! I so longed for it ! just at the sight,
I felt a knocking about my knee :—
And in the fury of that wild night,
Strange that the rogue should have
thought about me !

I knew that one in the Louvre lay :—
Oh what a hang-dog look he had !
And something within me tried to say,
" Now, if you buy it you're just as bad."
Yet I must have it ; there is a score
Will give him his money if I refuse—
To think of me, now, in that wild
uproar !
And he saved it perhaps from the
Petroleuse !

JOHN MEFF, M.A.

Alas ! he had outlived respect,
And the sharp sting of cold neglect,
And cared not wisely to reflect
Upon his ways,
Or to look back, or to expect
More happy days.

Once a rare scholar, ripe and full,
Famed Latinist in Classic School,
Whose biting satire scourged a fool
With lash of scorn :
An Epigrammatist by rule,
And native-born ;

Well could he tilt, and featly hit
 Opponents with quotation fit
 Of Attic or Horatian wit
 That made them wince,
 Nor heeded if his weapon smit
 Or Priest or Prince.'

Well could he, too, with mocking lip,
 Sneer at the sciolists who slip
 On niceties of scholarship,
 Nor would abate
 The lash of that contemptuous whip
 For love or hate.

So wrath had gathered round his life,
 And love had fallen away, and strife
 Had grown its crop of quarrels rife
 Until he stood,
 Having nor lover, friend, nor wife,
 In solitude.

Then nights and suppers, deemed divine
 Symposia of Falernian wine,
 And Syren songs that turn to swine
 Who list to hear,
 To these he greatly did incline
 Both heart and ear :

At first with shame ; but soon he fell
 A willing captive to their spell,
 And grew a taproom Oracle
 To yokels fuddled,
 Or mad with fiery drink, or well
 With beer bemuddled.

Now far from him Professor's chair,
 And High School with its classic air,
 And to the Kirk he may not dare
 Lift up his hopes ;
 For he is bound to shame and care
 By devil's ropes.

Yet far away in moorland cot
 Where first he tasted life's hard lot,
 His early promise, ne'er forgot,
 Has ne'er grown dim,
 And there is still a bright green spot
 On earth for him.

All else forgetting—pride of fame,
 A happy home, an honoured name,
 And God and truth, and praise and
 blame,
 He will not let
 His frail old mother know the shame
 Of want, or debt.

She wots not how his days are spent,
 But fails not of her yearly rent,
 Nor homely fare, nor clothing sent
 From him threadbare,
 Nor weekly letter kindly meant
 To ease her care.

And still she tells of him with pride,
 How with the minister he vied
 In learning, and had never lied
 As boy or man,
 Nor from his mother aught would hide
 Since life began.

A dutiful and loving son !
 A scholar who great fame had won !
 She other wish on earth had none
 Except to reach
 Some place, before her race was run,
 To hear him preach !

O mystic shuttles, how ye dart
 Through life's dim web ! O thou
 that art
 Still clinging to a better part
 'Mid all thy wrong !
 And oh the pathos of the heart,
 Believing long !

LATTO

A deep grey eye, a meek grey face,
 Grey sandy hair and garb worn grey,
 A limp loose form, a hurried pace
 That loitered never by the way,
 And knew no leisure and no play ;
 A wistful look of pained thought,
 As if he must, yet feared to think,

For his too daring Reason wrought
Dread of itself, as on the brink
Of chasms from which he fain would
shrink :

Much-pondering, his soul could see
But God in all the things that be,
In subtle matter, and changeful force,
In joy and anguish and remorse ;
No dual empire could he find,
But all was matter, and all was mind.
So had he lost his early faiths,
And glory of his simple youth,
And this had been like many deaths,
Though dying into larger truth.

This world, he said, all things divine
Are but the great God's uttered
thought :

His work is not like thine or mine
Which brains have planned, and tools
have wrought ;

It is, yet out of Him is not.

He makes the light, He makes the
shade

That limits it with form ; yet light
Is nothing but the ripple made
By rhythmic motion, giving sight
And wondrous vision of delight.

And shadow too is nothing. Why,
My shadow surely is not I ;

'Tis nothing ; yet I make it ; well

My form and features it shall tell,

And yet I use no art to make

This nothing, which for me you take.—

Thus dreamily the mystic spoke,

And ever as his thought was spent,

It rose again like wave that broke

In never-ending argument.

For all his thoughts of soul and mind

Were shaped by hard material law ;

And yet no matter could he find,

But mind created what it saw,

And of its shadows stood in awe :

And God was all. The solid earth,

The rivers and the shining seas,

And all to which the heavens gave
birth,

And all the rocks and hills and trees,
And grass and flowers and birds and
bees,

All were but pictured thoughts which
shone

As sparks from rapid wheel are thrown,
And gleam out in the dark, and then
Pass into nothingness again.

Yet while the world he thus refined
Into fine forms of subtle mind,

The subtle mind he made again

Gross by material forms of thought,

And chemic forces in the brain

Our vices and our virtues wrought.

Still gathering knowledge, day by day,
Unwearying in his search for light,

He gathered scruples by the way,

Till scarce one way of life seemed
right,

And he was in a helpless plight.

He scrupled at the Church's creed,

Although he held her mission grand ;

He scrupled at all paths which lead

To honour in an ancient land

Whose bridges have the ages spanned :

He scrupled at the tricks and lies,

Unscrupulous, of merchandise ;

And while all science he pursued,

He held no art or practice good,

Till, as by threads of cob-web dim,

All paths of life seemed shut to him ;

For still the scrupulous conscience
stood

And barred the way when it should
lead,

And made him helpless unto good,

That he from evil might be freed.

Fain would we laugh his scruples down,

But there his truth rebuked our mirth ;

He sought not riches or renown

Nor any fatness of the earth,

Might he but keep his honest worth ;

No envy had he of the great,
 No drop of bitterness had he,
 He was contented with the state
 Of noble-minded poverty,
 Well-pleased of no account to be.
 To hammer great thoughts out of stones,
 And fossil leaves, and scales and bones ;
 To give imagination wings,
 And frame the universe of things
 From chaos, or from nothing—that
 Was all he cared to labour at.
 And so he drifted still along,
 Having no social roots or ties,
 Self-fettered by his scruples strong,
 Yet making many good and wise.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

O my boy ! O my heart, it will break !
 And how like his father he sat !
 So cruel and cold ! and his voice did
 not shake,
 When he shattered my life and my
 hope, for the sake
 Of a creature like that !

Not that it matters how soon
 My poor dregs of life may depart :
 What are we mothers made for, but
 to croon
 A soft cradle-song to a low cradle-tune,
 With a slow-breaking heart ?

O Woman ! whose love is thy life,
 Thy love-life is sorrow and pain ;
 As the girl's love dawns, so her
 troubles grow rife,
 And they darken on down through
 the mother and wife,
 Drip-dripping like rain,

O my boy ! and I hoped, when they
 brought
 My baby to lie on my breast,

Now, at length, I shall find all the love
 I have sought,
 Now, at length, I shall bask in the
 bliss I have got,
 And my heart shall have rest.

From me thy life came, and by me
 Shall its young powers be nourished,
 alone ;
 No wanton shall poison its pure springs
 to thee
 With milk of coarse passion, but it
 shall all be
 Sweet and clean as my own.

And so, with pained pleasure, he drew
 His life, day by day, out of mine,
 And mine was the one tender hand
 that he knew :
 I suffered none else, for his kiss was
 like dew,
 And his breath like sweet wine.

O my beauty ! my hero ! What dreams
 I dreamed, as he smiled in my face !
 What hopes lit my life as with laugh-
 ing sun-gleams,
 When I kissed into silence his lustiest
 screams
 With a mirthful embrace.

Now, I pictured him soldier of fame
 Battling on in the thick of the fight ;
 Now, a statesman whose eloquence
 kindled a flame
 That fired all the land, till they
 shouted his name
 As the symbol of right.

Then I sighed, and said, Let him be
 good,
 And I heeded not what else is in store :
 But ah ! that was not what the
 mother's heart would,
 And still it went back to its loftier mood,
 And panted for more.

And what, if God, wroth at my pride,
Has humbled me now for my sin?
For I knew in my heart, when I said
it, I lied

And I knew it was dull moral prosing
to hide
The proud thought within.

I gave up all, all for my boy—
All the world where, they said, I once
shone ;
And the girl-wife, tremulous, timid
and coy,
Grew strong in the pride of a mother's
great joy,
And for him lived alone.

I grudged every moment away,
I grudged every task not for him ;
As he lay on my lap, I would croodle
and play,
As he lay in soft sleep, I would watch
him and pray
Till my wet eyes grew dim.

I grudged even his father, when he
Would toss up my child in the air,
Or when he would ride the high-horse
on his knee,
Or the little one laughed aloud in
his glee,
As he tangled his hair.

But sometimes, I thought, it were good
That another should come to divide
This so jealous love with its passionate
mood ;
Yet what other baby, like him, ever
could
Be my joy and my pride ?

Then I'd clasp him close to my
breast,
And kiss him, body and limb ;
It was wicked to dream even, or say
it in jest,

That another could ever be fondly
caressed
With the love I gave him.

And then as he grew up apace,
I went back to schooling once more,
And took up old studies of number
and case,
And the great tale of Troy, and of
that haughty race
By the brown Tiber's shore.

For I trembled to think he might read
What from youth should be hidden
with care,
And be smirched with some grossness
of word or deed,
Or filled with false thoughts, that, like
thistle-down seed,
Fly about in the air.

O my boy ! Oh the bliss of those days,
When I pored o'er his Latin and
Greek !
And I knew all his thoughts, and I
saw all his plays,
And I noted him manly and bright in
his ways,
And gentle and meek.

And now comes this woman to steal
All the fruit of my life and its bliss,
All the joy and the hope that I ever
shall feel,
And plants me a death-wound, nothing
can heal,
With her Judas-like kiss.

She is years and years older than he,
And has trapped him, I know, with
her guile,
For there's nothing he'll hear now,
and nothing will see
But goodness in her, and unfairness
in me,
As he basks in her smile.

Poor boy! if you knew! That wan
smile
Has been tried upon scores before you;
'Tis a well-worn look, you might see
by its style,
Has done duty for years, for her eyes,
the meanwhile,
Are not smiling nor true.

Charm! ay, such as practised ones
wield;
With a hard, hungry look in her eye,
And a lithe, supple form, and a heart
that is steeled,
Which no love can touch, and which
no love will yield,
Till the day that she die.

Of course he must marry her now;
He has gone quite too far to draw back;
But oh, what a sorrow is hid in the vow
To love the unloving, and make his
heart bow
To the yoke till it crack!

She has poisoned his mind against me,
And will poison it more if she can:
Oh that poor jealous heart of hers!
Can he not see,
It is not like a mother's? But no one
can be
Half so blind as a man.

No; their wedding I will not go near;
I never will darken her door,
Nor break bread of hers, nor partake
of her cheer—
Far rather I'd follow my boy on his bier
To his rest evermore!

I have thought, if I only could see
A baby of his in my lap,
A baby of his smiling up from my knee,
Oh, to nurse both mother and baby
would be
The blessedest hap!

But she! that woman! her child!
Do you wonder it makes me sad,
When I know that my boy has been
so beguiled?
It is weeks and months since ever
I've smiled,
And it's making me bad.

She is deep—Oh, she well knows her
game!—
And is ever so gentle and meek;
She sees I don't like her; but loves
all the same
Every one that he loves, every one of
his name,
All the days of the week!

And that drives me mad, for I know
He believes every word that she says.
If only by word or by look she would
show
The false, scheming heart that is hidden
below
Her soft, silky ways!

And her cunning is breeding hate,
And wickedest thoughts in me:
She might be another man's happy mate,
But to me and my house she is like a
dark Fate
That I shudder to see.

God, keep me from sin and wrath:
Had I lived in the old Greek time
When hate killed the King of men in
his bath,
I too might have sown the dread
aftermath
Of a horrible crime!

Who knows what one might have been?
Who knows what the heart might do?
Oh the thoughts of guilt I have some-
times seen,
Trying the shape of their guilt to screen
From my doubtful view!

And my husband goes, meanwhile,
Careless and easy of heart,
Daffing my cares with a mocking smile;
Ay, that was ever his hateful style
Of playing his part.

And my boy grows like him in that,
Liker him every day;
And oh so cruel and cool as he sat!
And oh so light he jested at
What I tried to say.

Once how I hoped he would wed—
For I know that she loves him dear—
That saintly child of the sainted dead!
They were born for each other, I
always said,
The self-same year.

But my wishes are nothing to him:
I am blind, of course, as a bat,
For my eyes with the tears of love
are dim;
And my cup of sorrow is filled to
the brim—
For a creature like that.

O mothers! whose love is such bliss
While the baby lies soft on your knee,
With each fond word, and each rap-
turous kiss,
Ye are sowing the seeds of a grief
like this
Which has come to me.

FATHER-IN-LAW

Never mind what your mother may say:
She was always hard on the girls:
Your virtuous women have all a way
Of saying the bitterest things they may
About them and their curls.

It is different, now, with a man:
The better he is, I think,

He'll speak of young fellows the best
that he can,
Though the rogues may be learning to
curse and ban,
And play, too, and drink.

Well; that never struck me until
I said it, and yet it is true;
Good men could not do what your
good women will,
And they call it a duty they have to fulfil
In pure love to you.

I am not good, myself, as you know,
And I never pretended to be;
And I've sometimes thought I was
happier so
Than to purse up my mouth, and look
glum as I go
At the things that I see.

But your mother is virtuous, lad;
Whatever she is, she is that;
A virtuous woman, for good or bad,
And she's fretting her soul, till it's
really sad,
At this wooing you're at.

She won't let me rest till I speak
My mind on't, and here's what I say:
Maybe her reasons are poor and weak,
And she's hot and hysteric, and not
very meek;
But she'll have her own way.

Don't insist upon your way, at least,
It was always my plan to give in,
And to make as if I would do as she
pleased,
Till she cooled down a bit; for her
keenness ceased
As she thought she would win.

Well; I know that she always meant
You, some day or other, should wed
That putty-faced doll of a baby-saint,
With her breath smelling ever so sickly
and faint,
As if more than half-dead.

I am glad you are out of that mess ;
 It would never have turned out well :
 She has not the breeding, the mouth,
 or the pace,
 And what your mother can see in
 her face
 I never could tell.

And it's right you should choose your
 own wife ;
 I did it, and every man should ;
 It is hard that another should tie you
 for life,
 Maybe to bother, vexation, and strife :
 Though she means it for good.

But you'd better give up your first
 "flame,"
 Nearly every man does that I know ;
 Your mother is wild when I name but
 her name,
 And it would not be nice for a girl, if
 she came
 To be ill-treated so.

I allow she is quiet and good,
 And handsome and ladylike too,
 She can ride too, and talk and dress as
 she should,
 And she is not at all of hysterical mood,
 And you say she loves you.

But your mother can't bear her, you
 see ;
 That don't go for much, I admit ;
 Our mothers are fain we should
 always be
 Still the small babies that sat on their
 knee,
 Admiring their wit.

But I'm told she is older than you ;
 Of course, that's a matter of taste,
 And old or young, they will always do
 Just what they like ; yet it's also true
 You should not be in haste.

If she had but a trifle of cash !
 I don't mind the two or three years ;
 They're not here or there ; but it's
 something rash
 To dive into wedlock, you see, with a
 splash,
 When, for aught that appears,

You have not between you, I think,
 Enough to pay for your tour ;
 And how you're to live, and to eat
 and drink,
 Is more than I know ; but it's all
 rose-pink
 To-day, to be sure.

Now, I have not a shilling to spare,
 Not a penny to play pitch-and-toss ;
 And you'd not like your mother to sit
 down with care
 Before she is Dowager, and you are heir
 Of the peat-hag and moss.

You must not count on me :
 I never could keep out of debt ;
 But I'll leave you a name, and a family
 tree
 Long held in honour, and bills two or
 three
 That are not honoured yet.

There's the old coach I had to renew,
 The horses not fit for the road,
 And the cellar quite empty ; and what
 could I do ?
 For the rents were all spent ere a guinea
 was due,
 When I last went abroad.

You'd not wish to see me drive out
 With a chaise, and a pair of old screws,
 And bring from the grocer's a bottle
 of stout ;
 No, there's things one must have, and
 yet cannot, without
 The help of the Jews.

But one should be able to do
Without luxuries, now, like books,
And pictures and china and ormolu,
And a wife that will always want
something new,
For her handsome looks.

Have you thought at all how you're
to live,
With taxes to pay, and your rent ?
You may run into debt, and your
tradesmen grieve ;
With your name, you may borrow,
although you must give
A heavy per cent.

But it's ticklish work doing that long,
And you can't trust the cards or the dice,
And betting without ready money is
wrong ;
And what can you do that is worth an
old song,
When you've tried it twice ?

A Lawyer that has but one brief,
A Doctor one patient who tends,
May marry, in hope that in turning
the leaf,
By healing a fool, or releasing a thief,
He may make what he spends.

But there's no kind of work now for you,
And nothing to hope that I see,
Unless I should die for fond lovers
and true,
Which is hard for a man in his sixties
to do,
With but gout in his knee.

You must think of it better ; and mind,
Not a word to your mother that's rough :
She is hot and hysterical, maybe,
and blind,
But then she's your mother, and ever
was kind ;
And that is enough.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

So, there ; you have told me all ;
And you want to know what we
must do ;
Your love is great, but your purse
is small,
And you leave me free, if I like,
to fall
From my word to you.

But what, if I am not free
To take my freedom again ?
What, if this foolish heart in me
Rather far would be bound than be
Without its chain ?

It is not the promise that binds,
But the love that changeth not ;
And pledges taken of faithless minds
I hold them but as the idle winds,
Heard, and forgot.

I am bound, be your lot what it may,
Bound fast, for I would not be free,
Bound by the love that will have its
own way,
And will hold me for ever, whatever
you say,
And whatever you be.

Would you be richer without
The love I have given to you ?
Would you be abler to go about,
Doing your work without fear or doubt,
Were I less true ?

Ah ! well ; it might break my heart,
But yet I could let it break,
If I thought you would play a nobler
part,
While I pined away with this love-
sick dart,
And its life-long ache.

You would not? Your life would be
wrecked?

Nay, I dare not say that: yet I fear
It would not be good for your soul
to reflect,

How the bloom and the glory of love
had been checked

In the spring o' the year.

It is bad, having once known the right,
And the impulse of nobleness prized,
To accept the less worthy, and order
the fight

For a cause that is meaner, and walk
by a light

That you once had despised.

I am not afraid to be poor,

I am not afraid of toil,

With you I could labour, with you too
endure;

But I fear to lose what keeps the flame
of life pure

As with sacredest oil.

But we must not hurry or fret,

Or think of ourselves alone;

Love waits for love, though the sun
be set,

And the stars come out, and the dews
are wet,

And the night winds moan.

That which is thine must be mine—

Home and friends and affairs,

Father and mother—mine and thine;

I have thy love, but I long and pine

To have also theirs.

Your mother dislikes me, I see;

Her face is hard and set

The moment she enters a room with me;

But if love will do it, I mean that she

Shall love me yet.

Be still, and wait for the light;

It is hard for a mother to part

With the son who made her life full
and bright,

And to think that another woman
has right

To his whole true heart.

I know what you must be to her,

For I know what you are now to me;

I can feel how her bosom must throb
and stir,

As if some robber of love I were

With a master-key.

But I will not part her and you:

I could not enter a home

To sever old ties so tender and true;

Yea, let me rather bring fresh and new

For the days to come.

Ah me! we are often unkind,

We who live for our love alone:

We think of ourselves, and are cold
and blind

To the anxious heart, and the troubled
mind

Half-turned to stone.

Like the dew in the heart of the flower

That bends with its burden of bliss,

Folding it close in the petalled bower,

You have lain in her heart from the

first mother-hour

And the first mother-kiss.

And now from that heart's warm core

Shall I drain off its fondly-clasped joy?

Nay, but you shall be only her gladness
more

Than all that you ever have been before

As a man or a boy.

Do you know that I like her the best?

Your father is nice and free,

With his pleasant talk and his light-
some jest,

But he speaks and smiles unto all the rest

As he does to me:

While she has a freezing look
Whenever I come her way,
And the formal speech of a printed
book—
Though I see, with a friend in a quiet
nook
She is bright and gay.

But I know 'tis her love of you
That makes her distrust me so ;
And I like her for that, for I love
you too,
And I think that her love of me will
be as true
When she comes to know.

Daughter to her I will be,
Love me she shall in the end ;
Thoughtful and dutiful, you shall see
My love will find out the way, and she
Shall call me a friend.

Let her be cross for a while,
I will only be sweeter for that ;
Let her frown if she will, I will
meekly smile,
And let her scold, I will walk a mile
To be rated at.

But love me she shall, if her heart
Is as true as I think it to be ;
Be patient, and see how I play my part,
And oh, my love will have perfect art,
When I think of thee !

A MINISTER'S DILEMMA

"Does any one forbid the banns?"
I asked ; and something in me cried,
And cried : Yea, I forbid this man's
Unloving claim to loveless bride.
She is my friend's ; he loved her well,
And they were plighted years ago,
And still their coming marriage bell
Rings hope into his heart, I know.

I cannot join this alien pair,
I cannot say the wedding prayer ;
I cannot lie ; nor God nor man
Could ever make them truly one :
Her face is pale, her hand is cold,
Not love has brought her here, but
gold.—

I paused ; and all was still as death ;
I looked around, but where was he ?
I watched the quick heave of her
breath ;

She dare not lift her eye to me.
'Twas all a lie—the solemn vow,
The orange-blossom and the veil,
And wedding-ring ; the prayer, I trow,
Came from me sobbing, like a wail
For broken faith that breaketh hearts ;
There was no blessing in its words,
There was no oneness in its parts,
It was a jar of broken chords.

THE RIVAL BROTHERS

There were two brothers loved a maid,
Well-a-day !
Side by side they had grown and
played,
Yet were not liker than sun and shade :
And the woods are green in May.

One was lord of the house and lands,
Well-a-day !
From the heather hill to the rippled
sands,
But the other he had the brains and
hands ;
And the woods are green in May.

One was sullen and hard and proud,
Well-a-day !
The other he mixed with the common
crowd,
Blythe as the lark that singeth loud,
When the woods are green in May.

Oh, a maiden's love must be wooed
with care,

Well-a-day!

It flits like the pewit here and there,
Hard to follow, and swift to scare;
And the woods are green in May.

A maiden's love has its dainty wiles,

Well-a-day!

Its glances coy, and its mocking smiles,
And is fain to linger by lanes and stiles,
When the woods are green in May.

The laird he came with a high demand,

Well-a-day!

And mickle he spake of his house
and land,
And the braes that sloped to the bonnie
sand;
And the woods so green in May.

Lightly she laughed at the laird that
morn,

Well-a-day!

When I sell my love, she said with
scorn,
It shall be for more than cows and corn;
And the woods are green in May.

When I sell my love the price I set,

Well-a-day!

It will be an earl's fair coronet,
But it is not going to market yet;
And the woods are green in May.

Ah! Fate is subtle and deep and dark,

Well-a-day!

'Tis not on the ship that he sets his mark,
But on the tree that shall wreck the
barque,

When the woods are green in May.

Oh, the rotten plank in her life was laid,

Well-a-day!

That day when the light heart gaily said
His cows and corn might not buy a maid,
And the woods are green in May.

Merrily by the trysting tree,

Well-a-day!

She told the tale, and they laughed
with glee

That night, the winsome brother and
she,

When the woods were green in May.

They went to the Kirk in the summer
tide,

Well-a-day!

A gallant lover and graceful bride,
Walking together side by side,
Oh, the woods are green in May.

They went to the Kirk and vowed
the vow,

Well-a-day!

And none was there but the priest,
I trow,

And the blackbird singing upon the
bough,

And the woods are green in May.

Oh, love is sweet with its trust complete,

Well-a-day!

And the rains may fall, and the sun
may beat,

But it cares not either for cold or heat;
And the woods are green in May.

He had the brains, and he had the hands,

Well-a-day!

But he was not lord of the house and
lands,

And the bonnie green braes by the
yellow sands,

And the woods are green in May.

To London town their steps were bent,

Well-a-day!

To the weary London streets they
went,

And all but their wealth of love was
spent

Ere the woods were green in May.

He would coin his thoughts into heaps
of gold,

Well-a-day !

For his hope was high, and his heart
was bold.—

How oft is the tragic story told !

And the woods are green in May.

Years came and went, and youths were
men,

Well-a-day !

They were ageing now who were
stalwart then,

And the laird like an old bear kept
his den,

Though the woods were green in May.

Grim as a bear in his chimney nook,

Well-a-day !

With a curse on his lip, and a frown
in his look,

And a pipe and a mug and a great
clasped book ;

And the woods are green in May.

A widow came with her sunny child,

Well-a-day !

And oh but her face it was meek and
mild !

And white as the daisy undefiled
When the woods are green in May.

With a woeful heart that was like to
break,

Well-a-day !

She prayed him, when she died, to take
Her little boy, for his father's sake ;

And the woods are green in May.

Might she but keep him for a space,

Well-a-day !

Till heaven should take her, in its
grace,

Again to look on her dear lord's face ;
And the woods are green in May.

Or if, alas ! that might not be,

Well-a-day !

She would be content her boy to see
Now and then by the trysting tree,
Where the woods were green in May.

It's oh so wily he smiled, and grim,

Well-a-day !

The while she pleaded so meek with
him,

And her eyes with the great salt tears
grew dim

And the woods are green in May.

Wily and hard, as he thought of that,

Well-a-day !

He had been cunningly plotting at :
“ So that,” he said, “ is your bastard
brat ” ;

And the woods are green in May.

“ ’Twas an ill market, I'll be sworn,

Well-a-day !

When you sold your love for a wanton's
scorn,

Which you would not sell for my cows
and corn ” ;

And the woods are green in May.

Oh, pale as death was her lily-white
cheek,

Well-a-day !

And then it flushed with a crimson
streak,

And the flash of her eye was no longer
meek ;

And the woods are green in May.

And the glance of her scorn he ill
could brook,

Well-a-day !

Crouching there in the chimney nook
With his pipe and his mug and his great

clasped book ;

O the woods are green in May !

She turned her right and round about,
Well-a-day !

She could not breathe for a fearful doubt,
Yet oh so stately as she went out,
And the woods are green in May.

Stately and grand she turned from him,
Well-a-day !

But her head was dizzy, her eyes were
dim,

As she dragged her steps through the
meadows trim ;

O the woods are green in May !

The steers were slumbering in the shade,
Well-a-day !

And she saw the deer in leafy glade
'Mong the tall green fern and the fox-
glove wade ;

And the woods are green in May.

But straight to the ivied Kirk she went,
Well-a-day !

And her thin hand shook, and her heart
grew faint

As over the great paged book she bent ;
And the woods are green in May.

For wedding record there was none,
Well-a-day !

And the grey old priest was dead and
gone,

And she was a widow and all alone :
And the woods are green in May.

"O mother, your hand it is cold as stone,
Well-a-day !

O mother, your grip it will crush my
bone,

But I would not heed if you would not
moan" ;

And the woods are green in May.

"He did not mean it—he could not
know,"

Well-a-day !

She groaned, and her voice was hollow
and low,

And her face was set with a death-like
woe :

O the woods are green in May.

"My boy, your father loved us well,
Well-a-day !

You never must dream he had that
to tell

Which might have sunk a soul to hell."
O the woods are green in May.

She led him out by the low kirk-door,
Well-a-day !

She led him down to the yellow shore,
And they were not heard of evermore.
But the woods were green in May.

NORTH COUNTRY FOLK

WEE CURLY POW

OFF with you, wee Curly Pow; off,
 little kitten, to bed;
 You'll not leave a beard on my chin, and
 you'll not leave a hair on my head,
 If you kiss me and tousele me so—there;
 already it's bald on the crown,
 And once it was thatched like a hay-
 stack, the fuzziest head in the town.
 Will I kiss you in bed to-night? Of
 course, I will, when you're asleep;
 And you'll know it, because you will
 dream of angels that stand and weep
 O'er chatterboxes that won't go to bed
 when they ought to go,
 And all these angels have beards that
 are three days old or so—
 You do not believe that angels ever
 have beards; they fly
 With beautiful wings, and their hair is
 like sunbeams up in the sky?
 Oh, you're a learned wee maidie; but
 yet it may well be true
 That I do not know about angels so
 well, my darling, as you.
 There; off with you now; that's the
 last, the very last kiss you shall get,
 And mind you, I will not be cheated,
 you're twenty at least, in my debt.
 Draw your chair nearer the fire, friend;
 there is a storm in the air:
 Hark! how the sea is moaning: God
 help the fisher-folk there

Out in their crazy old boats, for we
 shall have wind and snow
 Soon from the north-east driving, if
 aught of the weather I know.
 But the bickering log is pleasant, with
 the collie coiled on the rug,
 And the kettle there on the hob to brew
 us a steaming mug.
 What! no more brewing to-night?
 you would rather be still and
 brood?

So be it; and well I can guess what has
 started your thinking mood.

You are wondering who that child is,
 and what she can be to me,

A dull old bachelor here in the farm-
 house down by the sea?

A niece, a cousin perhaps? you had no
 ill thoughts in your head:

If you had, you would only have thought
 what scores of people have said.

Nay, no apology; none is needed:
 I've learnt to bear

Harder suspicion than yours, sir, and
 never to turn a hair.

I've nothing to be ashamed of; if all
 the truth were known,

It may even go to my credit, when
 God and I reckon alone;

Only that, good folk tell me, is hardly
 an orthodox thought:—

Not that I care, in the least, sir,
 whether it be so or not;

People here are afraid to utter a word
 out of joint,

But for me, I am far and away beyond
 our minister's point :
 Trouble has taught me, like Job, that
 sometimes the veriest lies
 Get them a hiding beneath the well-
 ordered words of the wise ;
 And wee Curly Pow is my darling,
 wee Curly Pow is my bliss !
 God gave me her in my sorrow, as one
 seals love with a kiss.

Oh, my Lizzie! my Lizzie! yet
 Lizzie never was mine,
 Except as the thing that we love is
 ours by a right divine,
 Except as the beauty of nature is his
 who has eyes to see,
 Though not an acre he owns, nor so
 much as a bush or a tree ;
 And so my Lizzie is mine by the love
 which for her I bore,
 Yea, a possession which nothing can
 rob me of evermore.

Perhaps I should tell you the story :
 it is an old one now,
 And it calls up things that are best left
 sleeping, I think ; for they grow
 Into hard thoughts when you stir them,
 mudding your life again,
 Just when it seems to be settling, and
 clearing off sorrow and pain.
 No matter ; you have a right to know
 what it all may mean,
 For you are my friend, and a friend
 should see what there is to be seen :
 One should have no dark closets locked
 in his heart to hide
 Aught from the wife of his bosom, or
 from the friend he has tried.

It is some ten years now since Lizzie
 —Pet's mother, you know—
 Came to be servant at Blavick—that's
 the next farm as you go
 Landward, maybe a mile hence ;
 perched on a bit of a hill

Down which brattles the brook that
 drives the wheel of our mill ;
 Worst farmed land hereabout, all
 scarred like a pock-pitted face
 Grey and unwholesome to look at :
 poor soil it is at the best,
 But starved too, for money is scarce
 there, and work not so pleasant
 as rest.

Anyhow Lizzie came there, at Lammas
 some ten years past,
 As bonny a lass as you'd see, sir, and
 clever and merry and chaste ;
 At kirk or at market you could not
 meet such another, nor find
 At kirk or wedding to dance with a
 partner so to your mind,
 Always so tidy and neat, and always
 as blithe as a bird,
 With a ready laugh for your joke, and
 as ready a word for your word.

Blavick's wife was a slut—or she had
 been, for now she was dead,
 And Lizzie, you see, had come to keep
 house for him in her stead—
 Sluttish women are mostly fat, of a
 rosy tint,
 But she was a black-a-vised person,
 bony and hard as flint :
 Yet such a house as she kept, sir !
 pigs and hens and dogs
 Littered the floors along with the milk-
 pails, peats, and logs ;
 Hard to pick your way through, for
 the place was dark with smoke,
 And that had been hard to breathe,
 but mostly a window was broke.
 Oh the dust on the settle ! oh the soot
 on the wall !
 And oh the dirt in the dairy, that was
 the worst of all !
 I wondered how she could live in it,
 not at all that she died ;
 But for long years she had lost all a
 woman's natural pride.

Blavick himself was always lounging about the place, A hulking lump of a man, with a huge expanse of face : And if talk could have done it, all would soon have come right. How he did talk, to be sure, through the long day and the night ! Maundering on about lime and guanos, rotation of crops, Soils and subsoils, and ploughs, and the makers of them and their shops, And all the new-fangled ways ! but none of the old-fashioned work Ever he put his hands to : there was not a rake or a fork, Plough or harrow that was not broken, and out of repair Just when they needed it most, and waste was everywhere. But Lizzie began at once to make everything nice and clean, To put everything in the house in its place where it should have been ; Pity the pig that ventured to grunt inside of her door ! Pity the hen that entered where it used to cackle before ! The kitchen was like a parlour, none of them dared to tread With mucky shoes on her earth-floor ; for she had a tongue in her head. Women need to be able to scourge a fool with speech ; That is their only weapon to punish him or to teach ; And it was worth while hearing her hit them off, one by one, Every phrase just a picture, lit up with a touch of fun, Making them all, shamefaced, to do her bidding at once, Till, at the last, she needed no more than a hasty glance.	Blavick used to be hateful ; but now it grew pleasant to me, At first, I hardly knew why, but just that I liked to see The change that Lizzie had wrought ; for that I would sit for hours And hear old Blavick's chatter, as if it were sweet as the flowers. Many a time when I went out just to look over a field, And see how the corn was ripening, or guess at the turnip yield ; Many a time when I came away from the thronging fair, Pleading I must go home for the task that I had to do there ; Many a time when I left for the kirk on the Sabbath day, It was not the kirk I went to, for Blavick was in my way : Somehow or other, something was always drawing me there, As the tide runs after the moon—and oh but my moon was fair ! Then I knew that I loved her—loved her with all my heart, As only a strong man can whose love is his strongest part. She was only a servant maiden, but oh she was my queen : She was only a cottar's daughter, and I was the farmer of Plein ; My fathers had been here, sir, for five generations back, And never a lease ran out but the laird would renew the tack, For they had money to farm with, and they could farm with skill, And never a lease ran out, but the land looked richer still. Yet she seemed high above me—ever so high above ! It never came into my head that I honoured her with my love ; Nay, but she was my moon, my chaste and beautiful moon,
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And I but the panting tide that followed
 her syne and soon ;
 She was so bright, quick-witted, and
 I so dull and slow,
 She high up in the heaven, and I on
 the earth below.
 Folk said that I might do better ? I
 thought, if she'd condescend
 To smile on me, I would follow her
 on to the wide world's end.

But there was one at Blavick—and he
 too the worst of the lot,
 Partly a horse-couping black-leg,
 partly, moreover, a sot ;
 Fain to look like a jockey, wearing a
 jaunty hat ;
 Some folk called him good-looking,—
 I am not a judge of that—
 But in his eye was a hot moist leer,
 and he had a chin
 That dropt inside of his necktie, and
 a hard and tight-drawn skin.
 Other folk called him clever, but I
 should say only smart—
 I call a man smart when his head does
 not feel the want of a heart,
 And works best when it has laid the
 conscience high on the shelf,
 Regarding not God or man, and caring
 for none but himself.

What is it women can see in men
 assured and bold,
 That they give their warm true hearts
 to hearts that are false and cold ?
 That they give their pure souls up to
 men that are foul with sin,
 Nor shrink from the outward taint, nor
 dread what is hidden within ?
 I never could comprehend how such
 things come to be,
 And now it is more than ever a mystery
 grown to me.
 That Blavick's son was a scamp, sir,
 as all the country knew :

You could read it plain in his face, he
 neither was manly nor true ;
 He ought to have been ashamed to
 speak to an honest maid,
 And she too ought to have known the
 weapon with which she played,
 Ought to have known the fellow would
 lead her a devil's dance.
 But now there was no getting speech
 of her—hardly I met her once ;
 Always you saw them together ; he
 went with her to the kirk,
 Chatted with her at the milking, sat
 with her in the mirk ;
 In harvest she was his bandster ; she
 raked for him at the hay ;
 And wherever you happened to meet
 her, he never was far away.
 Ay ! and he made her tryste him
 beside the "Dancing Cairn,"
 Although she had heard the story of
 Bessie Lusk and her bairn ;
 But she said it was all a lie ; the
 sheriff had let him go,
 And Bessie had fallen asleep, and died
 in the drifting snow ;
 And even the minister found no fault
 that he could blame,
 And it was wicked to rob a man of
 his honest name.
 All this I saw going on, and yet like
 a fool, one day—
 Every man plays the fool, I suppose,
 sir, once in a way—
 Finding her by herself, I asked her
 to be my wife ;
 And when she had said me nay, ere I
 turned to my lonely life,
 Partly because I loved her, and partly
 because I feared
 What might happen, if things went on
 as they now appeared,
 I warned her of him, as none but a
 fool would have thought to do.
 Of course, she blazed up fiercely : there
 was not a word of it true ;

'Twas gossip of wicked people, and
 some folk's meaner spite ;
 And she would believe in him now,
 though I proved it clear as the light ;
 And she would hold to him now, and
 sink with him or swim.—
 I felt there was something grand in her
 womanly faith in him,
 Felt too that I had been little—at
 least, that I must look small,
 Though I said no more than the truth,
 and had not said nearly it all ;
 But then I should just have taken mine
 answer, and gone my way.—
 A weary way now it was, sir, of life-
 less work all day,
 And brooding by night o'er the fire,
 and eating my heart like a fool,
 Till things grew over my mind, like
 the weeds in a standing pool,
 And I scarce knew what I was doing,
 or heeded a word that was said,
 Going to kirk and market, and never
 once turning my head ;
 Doing my job of business, doing my
 bit of prayer,
 With a changeless thought in my heart,
 and a changeless aching there.
 People, I daresay, wondered why I
 sat brooding alone ;
 What did it matter to me ? I let them
 go wondering on.
 I hated the talk of the market, the
 glee of the curling rink,
 And the rough jokes of the smithy,
 the ale-house too and its drink ;
 Yea, and I hated my life so brightened
 once by her smile,
 So haloed and hallowed to me by the
 dream of her love for a while,
 For now it had all gone dark, and I
 did not seem to mind
 What the clouds might be gathering,
 or what might be in the wind.
 Maybe, sir, you have known, now a
 feeling something like that,

When there's nothing you fear or wish
 for, it is all so stale and flat,
 Tasteless and dry as a rush-pith you
 chew, and you don't know why—
 It's a bad way to be found in if the
 devil should hap to come by.

So the spring passed with the tender
 green of the sticky leaves,
 The songs of the mating birds, and
 the swallows' nest in the eaves ;
 So too the glory of summer with the
 smell of clover and bean,
 The hawthorn white in the hedge, and
 the daisies white on the green ;
 And autumn also went with its wealth
 of well-stooked corn,
 And the kine that low for the milk-
 pail duly at even and morn.
 Nature passed through her changes,
 but I was still the same :
 I ne'er fished a pool for the trout,
 and I fired not a shot at the game :
 People were wedded and buried, but I
 was not there to see,
 At harvest-homes the lasses might
 none of them dance with me.
 There was nothing I heeded, except
 to put cash in the bank—
 Not that I cared for that either, at
 least not much ; but I thank
 Heaven that I grew not a miserly
 churl as I might have done,
 But for my wee Curly Pow, and her
 laugh like a blink of the sun.

But there ; I am going too fast—there
 was not a Curly Pow yet ;
 But I never can think of those days
 without thinking too of my pet,
 And what she has saved me from, and
 how I am in her debt :
 Perhaps she was given me for this, to
 keep me from being a churl,
 For my heart was set on the gold,
 until it was set on the girl.

Well; one evening that winter—it
 had been snowing all day,
 And now with the dry small drift the
 wind was making rough play,
 Rolling it low o'er the earth, and toss-
 ing it high in the air,
 And whirling it over the cliffs to toss
 up the white foam there.
 Not a night to be out in; but I
 thought I must go and look
 After a hirsel of sheep that were
 pasturing down by the brook
 In the hollow there where the rocks
 have opened to let it through;
 There the pasture is good, sir, and the
 pools for troutng too.
 So; I had seen to the sheep, and was
 fighting my way again
 Home through the blinding drift that
 smote with a stinging pain,
 When something flitted close by me,
 and moaned as it made for the shore
 Just where the rocks stand up, two
 hundred feet and more,
 Out of the wild wan water, with only
 a narrow ledge,
 Here and there, where the sea-gulls
 build, and their nestlings fledge.
 Even in quiet weather it is perilous
 walking there
 At night, for the cracks and fissures
 you come upon unaware,
 Where the waves rush in so madly,
 tossing the white foam high:
 But on a night like this, one who was
 not wishing to die
 Would have kept far off from the wind-
 swept cliffs, and the drifting snow,
 And the loud roar of the waves that
 were plunging down below.

What was it smote my heart, that the
 form, which dimly fell
 White on my eyes through the snow,
 was the girl I had loved so well;

Why was I sure that I heard her
 moan, though the raving wind
 Shrieked till my ears were as deaf as
 my eyes with the drift were blind?
 Heaven only knows, for I had no
 reason to think that she
 Was out of the house that night, or
 near to the rocks or me:
 Yet I was certain of it, as if it had
 been revealed
 Clear by the word of the Lord, and
 with miracle signed and sealed.
 So in a moment I rushed off after the
 fading form
 Into the pathless night that was dark
 with the blinding storm;
 And not five yards from the cliff I
 passed her with labouring breath,
 And stood in front of her there, stood
 between her and death.
 Pallid she was as a ghost, with a wild
 gleam in her eye,
 Gleam of the madness that drove her
 out that evening to die:
 Ah, poor soul! so lately rich in a full-
 blooded life,
 And merry as bird in the summer, or
 bee when the clover is rife,
 Glowing and singing, and laughing all
 through the work of the day,
 Ah! what anguish had broken a spirit
 so blithe and gay?
 What cruel wrong had dethroned a
 reason so sharp and clear
 That had not a moping doubt, and felt
 not a shadowy fear?
 "What did I mean? Let her pass.
 And what right had I to ask
 Whither she went, or why? And,
 forsooth, it was not my task
 To be her keeper," she said. It was
 not a time for speech:
 Vain in the tumult of feeling to order
 your words and preach:
 So then I tore off my plaid, and
 swathed her in it, ere she knew,

And lifted her up in my arms, and
strode through the tempest that blew
Wild, fiercer than ever; and after
struggling a while,
She lay as one dead on my bosom for
most part of a mile.
Ah! was it only thus I should bring
my love to my home?
Only thus to my bosom now was she
ever to come?
No gay bridal for us, no Kirk's blessing
or bells?
But a dead weight on my arm, and
something of sorrow that tells.
How I got home, I wot not: but I
strode on, slow or swift,
With a great black fear on my heart,
as I fought with the wind and drift.

My mother was living then; and when
I laid down my load
There on the sofa beside her, saying
that Woman and God
Must see to the rest of this gear; she
gave me a sudden glance,
With plainly a question in it, and
something of doubt, perchance,
As if she would say, 'There's something
wrong here; can it be you
Has wrought this evil, my son? God
help me if that be true.
Then, "Look you, mother," I said,
"there has been villainy here,
Double-damned villainy, sure, and the
truth of it yet shall appear,
Ay! if I pluck his heart out to get at
the secret within;—
Oh! I would have given my life to
save her from sorrow and sin.
But something has to be done, or after
all she will die.
Is she living? I thought that I half-
heard a kind of shivering sigh.
She was making straight for the sea,
when I found her close to the brink

Of the Kittywake Rock.—Ah! that
was a moan of life, I think;
Can I do anything, mother? If he
were here now! Well,
It would only be doing God's work to
hurl the villain to Hell."
Then she: "Leave God Himself to
do His own work, my son;
Vengeance is His, and surely, if slowly,
His judgments are done:
Do not the thing that you ought not,
for so our worst sorrows are wrought,
And sorrow, I fear me, will come yet
from doing this thing that ye ought.
But happen what may, ye did right:
only now you must saddle and ride;
This will need doctor's skill. 'Tis a
wild night, lad," she cried.
"And you are down-hearted and cold;
and yet it is better for you
Than sitting, helpless, at home, to have
something set you to do.
So let not your horse's hoofs tarry, but
mind the bridge and the shore,
And speed him as fast as you may, or
death will be here before."

Four miles' ride to the village, but the
wind was then on my back;
Four miles home with a gale in our
faces that did not slack
Once for a moment; a while to saddle
the doctor's brute,
And get him into his shoes, as he
growled at a gouty foot:
Yet we were back in the hour; ay,
that was the staunchest mare
Ever yet stood in my stable, or ate
from the manger there.
But we were not in time—Wee Curly
Pow came that night,
Came from the sin and the shame to
me as an angel of light.—
Strange that out of such evil such a
blessing should rise,

That from the very heart-breaking
came the heart-healing likewise.
But Lizzie was taken from me; she
never looked on her child,
The troubled unhappy soul sped forth
in the tempest wild,
Seeking to hide her with God, where
hiding is found alone;
And oh so still as she lay now, trouble
and tempest gone!

Mother looked sadly at me, and gravely
the Doctor too
Hinted that tongues would be clacking
or ever the day was through,
That the farmers of Plein had been
always men of an honoured name
Which never till now had been smirched
with a shadow of guilt or blame.
What was there now to smirch it?
Drily he smiled at that,
Turned up his eyebrows, and said that
the day would tell me what:
Meanwhile my heart within me was
wroth at the villain's deed;
Meanwhile my heart was breaking to
have failed her now in her need;
For I had loved her truly, and now I
was left alone;
And oh so still as she lay there, trouble
and tempest gone!

Not long had I to wait for what their
foreboding feared;
One day quietly passed—the lull ere
the storm appeared;
But on the next, like fire among burning
ricks, it ran;
It was told by every woman, believed
by every man,
How I had played the deceiver, how I
had brought disgrace
On the good name that was honoured
o'er every name in the place;
How Blavick's son had been blinded,
and all his people beguiled;

And how in her shame she had fled to
the father of her child;
And they say that he carried her home
a mile through the drifting snow;
And who could have ever believed that
Plein would have acted so?
I laughed as the tale was told, but I
tried to be still and mute,
For the grief was more than the wrath,
so the story had time to root:
And you cannot fight with a rumour
which nobody stands to quite,
For that is like hitting at shadows, and
beating the air at night.

Then it was that I found a blessing in
Curly Pow:
She was all of my love that remained,
all of Lizzie that I had now.
Every day she would lie for hours and
hours on my knee:
I was but an uncouth nurse, but she
learnt to trust in me;
And I got to love her somehow, and
it would have broken my heart,
Had anything happened on earth to
make me and the baby part.
They might think what thoughts they
pleased, they might say of me what
they list,
When she crowed up into my face, and
learned to look up and be kissed.
It was all of my love that remained, it
was all of my Lizzie I had,
And Lizzie had been my all. But, of
course, they said everything bad.

Of course, they said everything bad.
The minister once came in,
And vowed at my own fireside if I did
not confess the sin,
He must cut me off from the Church;
he was sorry, but what could he do?
Some one, I said, must confess, for
that sin has been done is true—

Sin of the shamefulest kind, and covered
 with perjuring lies,
 Sin that came nigh to murder, no art
 can ever disguise,
 Sin malignant that shifted its guilt on
 the innocent too,
 Sin that took up ill reports, and spread
 the false word for the true ;
 Verily sin all round. But for me I
 have nought to confess,
 Save that in pity I saved a life in its
 great distress.
 But maybe the Priest and Levite blamed
 the Samaritan's sin
 For binding the traveller's wounds, and
 bringing him home to his inn ;
 He saved an enemy's life, and it cost
 him money to do it ;
 It was not a prudent act, for only the
 Lord God knew it.
 Who then did it ? he asked. Enquire
 at your Elder's son,
 The horse-couping scoundrel,—it's not
 the first of these jobs he has done ;
 You've had him through hands before.
 Yes ! he swears he is not to blame ?
 But when you last had to deal with
 him, did he not swear the same ?
 Yet he was guilty, you know, and was
 held to have doubly sinned,
 And sat on the stool of repentance, and
 stared at the girls and grinned.
 What do you think, sir ? It strikes
 me, that did not do him much good ;
 And who is the better because her babe
 is unchristened ? or would
 Be worse if it were baptized ? It is
 nothing, of course, to me ;
 But if it is right that the babe, who has
 sinned no sin, should be
 Brought to the water of God, then
 why should this little one bide
 Like one who inherits a shame, while
 her father has none to hide ?
 See, I will hold her up before all the
 folk if you will,

I'll take all the vows on myself which
 I'll faithfully strive to fulfil,
 Will toil for her, pray for her, teach
 her to walk in the way undefiled ;
 Though there's not one drop of the
 Plein blood flows in the veins of the
 child.
 I cannot lie even to get you to bless
 the babe that I love :
 It is not my child—but it's God's ;
 and its name too is written above.

He was mightily scandalised, and flung
 right out of the house :
 But I did not heed him ; I knelt there
 down by my wee little mouse—
 She was not my Curly Pow yet, for
 she had not a hair on her head,
 But she always got some pretty name
 as I took her upstairs to her bed,
 As Mousie, or Birdie, or Daisy, or
 anything dainty or sweet,
 Or the Star, or the Song of my life, or
 my Lamb with its tender bleat—
 So I knelt, and prayed to the Father
 to help me to train her for Him,
 Since worse than orphan she was, and
 I felt that my eyes grew dim,
 While I sought for the better baptism
 that she might be pure and good,
 As no Kirk water could make her.
 And then in a happier mood
 We crowded and played there together,
 until it was time for bed ;
 Where I lay and dreamt of my Lizzie,
 who lay with the silent dead.

Well ; yes, the house now was lonely ;
 but that I did not much mind :
 People must go their own way ; and
 for me I was never inclined
 To mix with the folk round about here,
 who mostly have nothing to say,
 Save about cattle and crops and the
 prices on market day.

Not to pleasure the like of them should
 my ways be changed :
 So they might do as they listed ; and
 most of them were estranged.
 But I always had wee Curly Pow to
 help me to carry it through,
 And life is as happy to-day as on ever
 a day that I knew.
 Ay ! neighbours leave us alone, and
 the Kirk has cast us away,
 And every day of the week is as still
 as the Sabbath day :
 Worse thing they had not to do ; it
 was all the length they could go.
 Baby don't mind, but at first I felt it a
 terrible blow
 To be shut from the table of God, to
 be held as an outcast man,
 To be looked at askance like a branded
 sinner and publican.
 I went still to Church for a time, and
 sat on the square Plein pew,
 And heard the old Psalms, and the
 prayers, and bits of the sermon too,
 Meanwhile I wept like a child, as I
 thought of the happier days
 When father and mother, and all of us
 loved the old Kirk and its ways.
 But I stayed here at home ere long ;
 for I found more of God in the child,
 As I looked on her sweet pure face no
 shadow of sin had defiled ;
 My Sundays were better with her than
 there where my neighbours gloomed,
 As the minister preached at me some-
 times, and I sat and fretted and
 fumed.
 I don't say it's right, sir ; but God seems
 nearer me here now than there,
 My thoughts are sweeter and better
 with wee Curly Pow in her chair,
 As we read in the old Book together,
 and kneel for a brief word of prayer.
 What came of the horse-couping black-
 guard ? I never cared much to know :

For I found it was best for myself just
 to let the thought of him go
 Out of my mind altogether ; it was a
 dead fly, do you see ?
 Spoiling the ointment, of course—work-
 ing no good, sir, in me.
 He left the place by and by, with the
 constable hard on his track,
 Making it certain enough he would not
 be in haste to come back :
 Then there were rumours about him ;
 he had been killed, they said,
 In the big Bull's Run affair, and found
 in the field 'mong the dead ;
 But others averred he was caught
 horse-stealing, and lynched on a tree.
 Bah ! he is out of the way, sir, and
 that is the best thing for me :
 There was nothing I dreaded so much
 as to meet him some evening alone
 Where I met poor Lizzie that night.
 Ay, it's well that the fellow is gone.

DR. LINKLETTER'S SCHOLAR

I was his master ; and from me
 He learnt at a sitting his A B C :
 And step by step I led him through
 Grammar and History, Latin and
 Greek,
 And the science of Form and Number
 too,
 And Rhetoric that he might fitly speak
 As only the well-trained orator can,
 For speech is the noblest gift of man ;
 But speech that is not by the laws and
 books
 Is but as the cawing of jays and rooks,
 Or the meaningless babble of running
 brooks :
 And from the first it was plain to me
 What his rôle in the world must be.
 It was my mind that was stamped on his,
 When his was soft as the melted wax ;

Yet it was not wax, but gold ; and it is
Strong too and sharp, as the wood-
man's axe,

To hew him a way through the tangled
bush,

And also to smite his foe at a push—
Just the mind that is sure to win
Whatever the tussle it may be in,
For in this world they only tell
Who learn to hit out straight and well.
Therefore I follow his proud success,
Day by day, as he rises higher,
Read what he says in the public Press,
And note what the critics all admire ;
And this bit and that, which the whole
world praises

For its lofty thought, or its happy
phrases,

Or its insight clear, or the counsel wise
That in its large suggestion lies—

I could not have said it so well as he,
But I know there is something in it of me ;
I could not have worked out so perfect
a thought,

But I gave him at first the true key-note ;
For I was his master, and from me
He learnt, as I told you, his A B C.

Ah, sir, only to think that you
Had not the fitting words at command
To utter the thought that you felt
was true ;

And what it may grow in a master's
hand !

At times, I can hardly detect the seed,
When it blossoms out in the perfect
flower,

For it had been only a trifling weed
If left to ripen, by sun and shower,
In the poor soil of a mind like mine :

Yet the germ of it all was there, I know,
Though only he could have made it grow
Into a glory so divine.

Wonderful, sir, that genius should
Transform your thought, like its natural
food,

And breathe into it a life so rich
The author of it shall hardly find
What of it now is his, and which
First smote the spark from the glowing
mind !

A chit of a thing when he came to me ;
No shears had ever yet come on his head,
And his mother could hardly bear to see
The golden curls which at last were
shed,

That he might be like the rest of
the boys
Who jeered at him, till she polled
his hair.—

She kept it among her treasured joys,
Wrapt up in her marriage lines with care.
And I felt with her, as I must confess :
He was so beautiful before,
So touched with a sweet and tender
grace ;

And now we had made him common-
place,

Like the louts that were playing about
the door.

A little ago he seemed just a child,
Thoughtful yet bidable, gentle and mild,
My little Nazarite, five years old,
With his great black eyes, and his
hair unpolled ;

And I felt he would be my Samson yet,
Not for his brute strength and clumsy
sport,

But for his humour, and for his wit,
Quick to reason, and keen to retort,
And for a memory that forgot

Of all you might teach him never a jot.
Already I saw what he was to be,
When he shook the curls of his golden
hair ;

And now as the small face looked at me,
I thought, ah ! what if his strength
was there ?

And I felt my eyes like her's grow dim,
He was so changed when we gazed
at him.

That was a foolish thought, but love
Makes all of us foolish now and then,
And he who thinks he is far above
Such things is the foolishest among
men;

Fond may be foolish, yet love is wise;
They call it blind, but the seeing eyes
See best by the light in the heart
that lies.

Oh but our work went merrily now,
Blithe as the birds that sing on the
bough,

For all the lore of the ancient times
Came with as natural ease to him
As song to the thrush on the stately
limes

Piping aloud in the evening dim.
It was not work, it was liker play,
Teaching my pupil day by day;
Yet sometimes it was dreadful too,
He kept such a resolute grip of all
The gods and heroes mythical,
They were all so real to him and true,
And all their loves had hates he knew,
Better than what went on around
Among the boys on the playing
ground;

And in his innocence he would talk
Of Jove and Leda in our walk,
And of the foam-born beautiful One,
And the myths of the all-embracing
Sun.

But all is pure to the pure in heart,
And chaste as the marble of highest
Art.

Ah! sir, you cannot know what it is,
How it wears the patience down to
the bone

To toil through a summer day like this,
Sharpening fools on the grinding stone,
While stolid or sullen they grow by
fits,

And nothing will put an edge on
their wits;

We have to be pedants and too precise,
Or nothing would flourish but sloth
and vice.

But oh the joy! when you chance
to find

One who can answer to all your mind,
Who hungers for learning, as hawk
for its prey,

And never forgets a word you say—
A bright young soul to be trained
with skill,

Ready to take what shape you will,
Believing, loving, intent to know,
And clear as a mirror the truth to show,
But not like a mirror to let it go.

That was a gladness he gave to me
From the day that I taught him his
A B C.

Only once had I ever seen
Such another, who so combined
Memory, fancy, and reason keen;
And he from the first had always been
Sickly in body, though strong in mind.
Ah the sorrow I had for him,
As he wasted slow with an inward fire,
And his eye grew brighter, as mine
grew dim

With the dying of hope in a deep
desire!

A beautiful spirit! and when he parted
From the shrunken form, and the
aching pain,

I said, as I sat down broken-hearted,
That I never should love, as I had,
again,

Spending my life on him day by day,
Only to steal his life away.

For I ought to have noted the hectic
streak,

When first it flushed on his pallid cheek,
And I—I had only worked him still
Because he worked with so ready a will,
And his mother, I kept the truth
from her—

And what, if I had been his murderer?

Yet here was another like the first,
 But brighter still ; and now if he
 Were also to die, I should be accursed
 Of all proud mothers that heard of me.
 Therefore I said, it shall not be ;
 We will not always be poring on books,
 We will not study with sickly looks ;
 We will go up to the breezy hills,
 And scent the smell of the old pine-
 wood ;
 Or down where the sea-spray flies,
 and fills
 The air with a breath that is also good.
 It is stupid indeed to be spending hours
 Only seeking for vulgar health ;
 But then we can gather the lore of
 flowers,
 And drink in the wonder of nature's
 wealth,
 And fight off Death with the weeds
 and shells,
 And the strong, rich life in the sea
 that dwells.
 So rarely a day then came and went,
 But we heard the plash of the rushing
 wave ;
 And often a day on the hills was spent,
 Where the mountain ash, or the pine
 trees brave
 The mist and the cloud and the storm-
 wind's shock,
 With roots clawed fast to the grey-
 brown rock.
 I watched if a fire ever burned in
 his eye,
 I watched if a flush ever dyed his cheek ;
 Not his mother herself would have
 watched as I ;
 Yet I only watched him ; I did not
 speak ;
 For thinking of health may bring
 disease,
 And I did but talk of the hills and
 trees,
 And the bright sea-pools, and the
 running brooks,

And the dainty gulls, and the cawing
 rooks,
 And how they were better than musty
 books.
 That was not true ; but you have to hide
 Your thoughts from the eager ones at
 your side.
 So passed the school-years, gathering in
 Harvest of wisdom from the wise,
 Harvest of pictures for the eyes,
 Harvest of song for the heart within—
 Harvest richer than all before,
 For it was not books that we read alone,
 But God's handwriting, on earth and
 stone,
 Penned by Him in the days of yore,
 Though it's only now we begin to spell
 The sacred writing, and read it well.
 Oh so glad were those years to me !
 Oh so fruitful of freshest thought !
 Watching the gull or the guillemot,
 Or searching the rock-pools by the sea,
 Or learning from the nest-building
 swallows,
 Or noting the woodman and his craft,
 As he felled the pine trees, and bound
 the raft,
 Or poled it down through the rushing
 shallows !
 At first, I grudged the hours it took,
 At first, I sighed for the half-read book,
 And carried its thoughts about with me,
 Until I found that we could not see
 The world without for the world within,
 Nor gather the health we were there
 to win.
 So the books and the maps were laid
 aside
 That we might look forth open-eyed,
 As Homer did, on the world wide.
 And good are the pictures still, I find,
 Then hung in the chambers of the mind.

What a career was his at college !
 Never the like of it seen before,

Since Crichton, Admirable for know-
ledge,
Startled the schools with his wondrous
lore.

Not Faust was a defter spirit than he
In Letters and Arts and Philosophy ;
Medals, scholarships, honours poured
Down on his head with one accord,
And yet the small head was not turned,
But only for yet more learning burned.
People would glance at the Honours'
List,

And say, "Is there nothing he cannot
do?"

For ne'er at the head of it was he
missed ;

His name was the first that came in view
In Classics and Logic and Rhetoric too,
Which are the things that the wise
of old,

More than all others, received to hold.
Yet some folk, envious, hinted that such
Prodigies rarely came to much.

I knew better. I worked with him
Night after night, till the lamp grew
dim,

Night after night, till the day would
break :

For I said, he will carry to many lands
My name like Ascham's, and for his
sake

I too of fame shall yet partake ;

For I am the clockwork, he the hands.

Oh, I was proud of him ; who but he ?

For was he not also a part of me ?

Of course, he was more than I ; yet so

What I, too, might have been, he
would show.

And when at length he was capped,
the town

Gathered to see him, and shout his
praises,

As, smothered in prize-books, he sat
down,

And blushed at the Principal's eloquent
phrases ;

But his mother and I were hid in a nook,
And mingled our silent tears, and shook.

Ah ! is there anything leaves no
sorrow—

The mark of the human—on its way,
When the hope, that brightened the
looked-for morrow,

Drifts past at length into yesterday ?

Well, well ! it is idle to moralise,

Wasting breath upon empty sighs ;

And we have ourselves, no doubt, to
blame,

When bubbles burst we have fondly
blown ;

And if you have properly played the
game,

Shall you grieve that one of the tricks
is gone,

Which you hoped to win with the
cards you had ?

Or vow that your partner's play was
bad ?

I was foolish and vain, sir ; for I
thought

I was filling his mind like an empty
bottle,

When we read Justinian now, and
wrought

At the politics, too, of Aristotle.

But he was not a vessel that I could fill ;

He was a man with his own strong will,

And I was wrong when I took it ill.

Why is it people smile at me
In a pitying, patronising way ?—

They've always done it, even when they

Were learning with my eyes to see

The beauty of classic verse or prose :—

They tried to hide it, but yet I saw.

What can it be ? I am not like those

Beautiful youths, I know, who draw

All hearts to them by their witching look.

In a drawing-room now I lose my head,

Till I get in a corner, and find a book,

And lose myself in its thoughts instead.

It is true, I am awkward in company,
And blush if a lady but speaks to me,
And never do find the right word to say,
And my legs or arms are in my way,
And I've no small talk, nor a spark
of wit,

And my laugh is not mirthful—can
that be it?

Well, well; I am nothing, and ne'er
shall be,

Unless my pupils interpret me;

Just like a language few will take

The pains to learn, though it hide a store

Of precious wisdom and curious lore,

And those who learn it a name will
make.

But I hoped that he would esteem it
more.

Yet his mother herself would some-
times say,

He has no heart; he is only brain;

There is nothing he loves in a perfect
way,

There is none that he would not grieve
and pain

To gain his end. And I also felt,

Though he had no passion of youthful
vice,

But was ever as pure and cold as ice,

Yet was it ice that nought could melt;

And he never was young like other boys,

Nor made them his friends, nor loved
their joys.

He was fain to argue and to dispute,

Even when he saw that he was wrong;

It was idle his arguments to refute,

For when he was beaten by reasons
strong,

He would ride away on a jest or two,

In the triumph of laughter mocking you.

At the lowly in heart too he would sneer,

And the simple in heart he held for fools,

And there were times when he made
me fear

He cared for us only as his tools.

Yet maybe we led him, ourselves, to
think

That only for him did we keep our
lamps trim,

That all our wells were for him to drink,

And all existed only for him.

And oh, what a mind he had! what
power!

What subtlest insight to detect

The hidden analogies few suspect!

As the wild bee travels from flower to
flower,

And brings quick life to the barren seed,

So would he bring from far afield

What made the commonest thing to
yield

Undreamt of meaning, and life indeed.

So it came at last that, in gown and wig,

I heard him plead in a fitting cause.

How the words rolled from him round
and big!

Not Tully himself more versed in the
laws

Of Rhetoric, how to turn and wind

Round judge or jury, and win their ear,

Then flash a metaphor into their mind,

Or a stroke of wit that they smile to
hear,

And, when he has got them well in
hand,

Close with a peroration grand—

Or touching, if that is the vein most fit;

But, with our British mind, I know

Hard reasoning, and a harder hit

Will often farther than pathos go,

Or pictures of clients in stricken woe.

He hit the nail on the head, I saw:

Not once did he miss a point of Law,

Or fail the heart of the case to seize,

Or to persuade and rouse and please:

Nothing was showy or juvenile,

Nothing merely for ornament;

Every word was in perfect style,

Every plea to the marrow went,

Clenched with a telling precedent.—

Oh, what a gift is that, to stand
 Before the majesty of the Law,
 And hold your argument clear in hand,
 And state the matter without a flaw !
 I had studied the case myself at night,
 And seen it, I reckoned, as clear as
 light :
 But I felt, as I heard him pleading now,
 The cold sweat beading upon my brow,
 And there was a ringing in my brain,
 And all was dark, till he made it plain.
 I could not have spoken a word for awe
 Of the ermined majesty of the Law.

Now when he finished, the Judge
 looked down,
 And complimented his able friend :
 The Bar had done, he was free to own,
 All that the Bar could to defend
 A weighty cause in a weighty way,
 And to fulfil the hope which they,
 And all who knew of his honours won
 In other fields, had formed of him.
 So the grave Judge. When he had done,
 My head went round, and my eyes
 grew dim,
 And something I said—I know not well
 What it was,—but a silence fell
 On all the court ; and I seemed to see
 A little boy at his A B C,
 Sitting thoughtfully at my knee.

Of course, it was wrong in me to go
 In the hour of his triumph thus, and show
 My threadbare coat, and my withered
 face
 At such a time, and in such a place ;
 Though it's true my coat was thin
 and bare
 That he might be garmented fitly there.
 But it cut me, at first, to the quick,
 when he
 Turned with a freezing look from me—
 Maybe, I had said something wild ;
 My head was dazed when I thought
 of the child,

And what he had grown with the help
 of me,
 And what in the future he yet might
 be :—
 Still it was wrong, and I see it now,
 So to intrude with empty and vain
 Thoughts of myself ; and I ought to bow
 To the fit rebuke, though it gave
 me pain,
 As I crept away home in the dripping
 rain.
 Of course, he loves me, I surely know it,
 But that was not the right time to
 show it ;
 And nobody likes, in the hour of
 his pride,
 To have shabby old friends creeping
 up to his side.

What a brain he has for clearness and
 power !
 What a grasp of principles and details !
 What would take you a year, he will
 seize in an hour ;
 And then his courage too never fails.
 He may be Lord High Chancellor yet,
 But he will write as a scholar no less
 (To think that a part of me may be set
 To give law from the woolsack, or
 teach from the press !)
 None of your idle poems, or flash
 Essays, biographies, tales, or trash,
 But solid works for the thoughtful few,
 Writ with a golden pen and true.
 I know it is in him. I put it there,
 And he will bring it out clear and fair,
 When legal briefs and affairs of state
 Slacken enough to give him leisure.—
 But that must be soon, for I may not wait
 Many more days for the Psalmist's date,
 When years are a burden, and not a
 pleasure.
 Hard, hard he works for the fame he
 seeks
 Through the busy term, and the
 holiday weeks ;

Yet he never is weary, never complains,
 Knows nothing of sickness, or aching
 pains,
 Or a wish for rest, or bile-clogged
 brains.
 That is the fruit of our happy days
 By the windy shores, and the wooded
 braes.
 Wonderful, wonderful ! such a man !
 If he would only, now and then,
 Drop me a hasty scrape of his pen,
 When he has leisure to write, and can !
 It's hardly reasonable, I know,
 In me to be looking for that, although
 I spent the wealth of my life on him,
 And all the knowledge of studious years,
 And filled his cup, as it were to the brim,
 With the lore that now in his life
 appears.
 But what of that, sir ? And what had I
 Been but a grave to bury it in,
 Were it not for the scholar I trained to fly
 With the bravest of them that mount
 up high
 Riches and honours and fame to win ?
 And he has won them, and shall win yet
 The ermined robe, and the coronet,
 And a noble name, and mine shall be
 Blended with his, too, in history.
 And I've thought, now and then, in
 that coming day,
 When they talk of us, they will maybe
 say,
 I was the Moses that saw the Lord,
 He but the Aaron that gave the word.
 But that is when I am vain and proud,
 And sit by the fire, and think aloud,
 Wondering why he only writes
 A scrap to say that he has no time ;
 And I'm ready to think that is nearly
 a crime,
 As I brood and fret through the long
 dull nights.
 But I ought to be grateful, indeed,
 that he
 Finds even a moment to think of me,

With his hands so full, and his mind
 so strained,
 And the splendid place by his genius
 gained ;
 For they say he is not more in request
 At the Courts of Law than in stately
 Halls,
 Where his wit has made him a
 welcome guest,
 And Beauty swims through its routs
 and balls.
 Ay, ay ! and still I am sitting alone
 Among the old books by the old
 hearth-stone.
 But I do not grudge him ; I only hope,
 When his cup is full, he will spill me
 a drop,
 For my work is done, and my days
 are dim,
 And my heart grows thirsty to hear
 from him,
 As the shadows of the Eternal fold
 Around my head that is grey and old.

DICK DALGLEISH

Just a mechanic with big, broad head,—
 Carpenter, maybe, or engineer,—
 Deft with a skilled hand at winning
 his bread,
 Scornful of varnish and show and veneer ;
 Rough-handed, plain-spoken, strong in
 his youth,
 Loyal to all of his order and craft ;
 Loudly maintaining the fact and the
 truth,
 At all pretences as loudly he laughed ;
 Laughed at quill-drivers, and white-
 fingered dandies
 Measuring ribbons with yard-stick
 and tape ;
 Laughed more at frowsy men doctoring
 brandies,
 And calling their drugs the pure fruit
 of the grape :

He slept through the night, and he
toiled all the day,
And nothing he drank but the brook
by the way.

Out on a holiday, wholesomely dressed,
Clean-washed, clean-shirted, his wife
by his side,

With a small baby she clasped to her
breast,

And chirped to, and watched with a
motherly pride.

Proud of her baby, and proud of her
Man,

All her young face was like sunshine
to see ;

No sickly vapours had she, nor a wan
Fine-lady look, but was healthful as he.
How she looked up to him ! Who
was so clever ?

Who was so good as her Dick ? It
is true

He was blunt-spoken, but then he
would never

Harm a poor worm or a fly, if he
knew ;

And he read everything—science, and
plays,

And poems, and all that the news-
paper says.

Out on a holiday, sailing down
The broad clear river that bore away
Thronging crowds from the broiling
town

To the birch-clad hill or the sandy bay ;

Shrewdly he glanced at either shore,
Lined with the half-finished skeleton

ships,

Spoke of their rigging, abaft and afore,
And what they might do at their

trial trips ;

Plainly knew all about this one's
gearing,

The other one's engines, paddles, or
screw,

And the new methods of working
and steering,

What coal they needed, and what coal
could do ;

And shrewdly projected a wonderful
dream,

Into the future, of iron and steam.

I scarce know why, but I rather took
To the manly bearing of him, and
the fond

Young pride which his wife showed in
every look,

Than to all the rest, as their ways I
conned :

They were mostly broad-cloth citizen
folks,

Each with his newspaper where he read
The markets first, and the price of

stocks,

And what at the bankrupt court sit-
tings was said :

They carried their business with them
always ;

While their wives were towny and
overdressed,

Talked of their city life and its small
ways,

And dinners and weddings and fashion
and taste.

So I took my seat, with a frank
good-day,

By the big mechanic in homespun grey.

I was fain to speak of his craft and
trade,

But he went rather at first for books :

Did I not think that Darwin made
A case for the worms as against the

rooks ?

What had the birds done for earth
like these

Dumb, silent ploughers who made the
soil

For rooks to nestle on its high trees,
And man to live by his sweat and toil ?

That was a man, sir, with hardly a rival
For his power to see, and his grasp of
thought ;

And as for his doctrine of fit survival,
That's the new gospel this age has got ;
And we must be rid of the drones in
the hive,

That the true workers may live and
thrive.

They're nearly all drones now on board
here to-day ;

Our lads went off with an earlier boat ;
But wife, sir, and baby must have their
own way,

And she likes the gentle-folks when
she's afloat.

It is so, you know, Kate ; you're fain
now to hear

The sweet-spoken damsels come prais-
ing your child ;

And if we went down, you would
rather appear

With respectable folk, pretty-mannered
and mild,

Than stand at the judgment with
Dick, Tom, and Harry

Not more than half-sobered with gulps
of the sea—

Oh, how can I say so, when you chose
to marry

Such a blunt working chap, such a
rough tyke as me ?

That's true ; yet you cannot deny it
was you

Brought me here with this soft-handed,
soft-headed crew.

Would you wish me, old girl, now, to
be just like these,

With broadcloth and white linen worn
every day,

And to saunter through 'Change for
an hour at my ease,

And call that my work, though it looks
so like play ?

Their brow never sweats with the work
they have done,

Unless at some queer job that looks
rather ill,

And then it is but for the risk that
they run,

When they shuffle the cards for a trial
of skill.

Now, I come home at evening, Kate,
dirty and weary,

But my conscience is clean, and my
head, too, is clear ;

I don't sit, and drink wine, and make
the house dreary,

As some of them do half the days of
the year ;

I take on no stains from my work or
my play

Which a pail of fresh water will not
wash away.

They buy and they sell for the rise
or fall,

When neither a rise nor a fall should be,
Filching a profit still, great or small,

For the doing of nothing that I can see.
There's a little chap sitting yonder—

look !

He's bulling and bearing all the day
long ;

And they're fain to glance at his
jotting-book,

For they say that his guesses are
seldom wrong ;

I call him the big flea blood-sucking
commerce,

And these are the little fleas blood-
sucking him ;

And they live upon us, all our winters
and summers—

Swarms of them, sir—in the hand-
somest trim,

They make their game, and the stakes
are laid,

And they rake in the gold which the
workers made

Yet what have they done for the world
 by their strokes
 Of betting and hedging? I want to
 know that.
 And who is the happier hearing their
 jokes?
 And whose life is helped by the jobs
 they are at?
 With their sharp arithmetic they
 fashion a blade
 That cuts a big slice of our profit away;
 And yet they've done nothing for it
 except trade
 On the folly of some, for which all
 have to pay!
 I used to read Carlyle, and laughed at
 his "gig-men,"
 And I still like the old fellow's rough
 tongue a bit;
 But he never yet said how the
 "clothes-men" and "wig-men"
 Must make way at last for the men
 who are fit.
 That's Darwin's discovery; and how
 can you doubt
 These chaps, like the dodo, are bound
 to die out?

When you spoke to me first, you were
 wishing to know
 About us, the working men; what our
 thoughts are;
 And whereto our strikes and our unions
 grow;
 And how near the end is, or, maybe,
 how far.—
 Ah, folks are grown curious about us,
 who once
 Sniffed the grease of our moleskins, and
 hurried them past.
 You're not of that sort, I allow; and
 perchance
 We are crustier, now that our day's
 come at last,
 Than we should be. That comes of
 the way we've been living;

Men trample on man, and they make
 him a brute;
 Though of course we ought all to be
 taking and giving,
 And keep our good humour and man-
 hood to boot.
 But those who have tasted of slight
 and neglect,
 When folk grow too civil, are apt to
 suspect.

I don't say it's right. But at one
 time I made
 What was plainly to me a new thing
 in our line;
 A saving of labour to quicken the trade,
 And bring in more wealth than the
 gold in a mine.
 Well, I spoke to the head of our firm;
 but he turned,
 With a big oath, and bade me go work
 at my tools;
 He had heard such tales once till his
 fingers were burned,
 And he found that your workmen-
 inventors were fools.
 But afterwards, learning more truly
 about it,
 Oh, he spoke me so bland, and would
 fain see the thing;
 So I brought forth my model—as
 proud, do not doubt it,
 As Kate of her baby there,—and with
 a swing
 Of the big hammer, I dashed it in bits,
 Saying, What could come out of a
 working man's wits?

I had toiled at it, sir, every night for
 a year,
 So hopeful and happy in seeing my
 thought
 Turned now into iron, and coming
 out clear,
 At last, through a plain inspiration
 I got.—

For why should not God inspire
minds to invent

As well as to preach, and be praised
for His gift?

Sir, it came like a flash and a thrill
that were sent

In a moment of failure, when I was
adrift;

As "the still small voice," which the
prophet must hearken,

Because it was God's, so the thing
came to me,

Like the gladness of light when that
failure did darken

Around me, and I was as broken as he:
And what is the joy of their gold, and

their gain,
To the gladness I had when I saw it

all plain?

You think it was childish to waste the
ripe fruit

Of my labour and thought. Not a
whit; it's all here

As clear in my head as that day, and
to boot

Some riper thought still that may some
time appear.

But I told you this only to show
how, in vain,

Folk think all at once they can heal
the huge rent

In our social order where one's heart
and brain

Find seldom the right places for which
they were meant.—

But why don't I patent the thing I
invented?—

Oh, and rise in the world, as they say,
and grow rich,

And have a grand house finely papered
and painted,

And mount me a-horseback to land
in a ditch,

And dress my good Kate in her sealskin
and silk,

And quaff my champagne as it were
bottled milk?

Well, I once knew a man with a head-
piece to think,

And hands that could work out the
thought of his head—

It is true that he had a bad weakness
for drink,

And would whimper about it, and wish
he were dead;—

But he took to that line, and had every-
thing fine,

A house in a big square, with lamps at
the door,

And carriages, horses, and flunkies,
and wine,

And heaven knows what that he had
not before.

But the ladies were shy of his wife;
and the flunkies—

The lazy fat rogues, I'd have sweated
them well—

At the back of his chair stood, and
grinned there like monkeys,

And down in the kitchen they laughed
at his bell;

And he had not a moment of comfort
or peace,

Till a crash stript him bare as a sheep
of its fleece.

No, I'll not take that way, sir; I don't
care to rise

Above my own class—we are happier so.

The Son of the Carpenter now, He
was wise

In the old town of Nazareth long,
long ago.

We are not very pious, we work-
men, I fear,

Don't go much to church, but we read
about Him;

And the things that we read are not
quite what we hear

The minister blow off like froth from
the brim

Of a pot of small beer. Nay, I don't
blame the preacher ;
It's just what we want that we find
in our books ;
As the sun is a painter to some, and a
bleacher
To others ; it is as the eye is that looks ;
You open the door to which you have
the key,
And I find the message that God meant
for me.

But the Carpenter, now, did not care
to be great,
And to ape what the fine lords of
Herod might do,
Nor yet be called Rabbi, and sit in
the gate
As a Judge, or a Parliament man to
the Jew.
The fox had his hole, and the bird
of the air
Had its nest ; but He had not roof o'er
His head,
And heeded not purple and sumptuous
fare,
And borrowed a grave when He lay
with the dead.
And this is the gospel I read in the
story—
Though I don't say it mayn't have
another to you—
The Lord did not seek His own honour
and glory,
But stood by His craftsmen and fishers
all through.
He held to His class that their ills
he might cure,
And lift up the head of the needy
and poor.

Well, that is our gospel too, that is
our Ark,
Not to rise from our class, but to raise
the class higher,

Not to take to the nice ways of lawyer
or clerk,
Not to turn from the hammer, the file,
and the fire ;
But to stand by our order and stick to
our tools,
And still win our bread by the sweat
of our brow,
And to organise labour by Christian-
like rules,
Not that some, but that all, may be
better than now,
May have homes of more comfort, and
lives with more leisure
To read, and to think, and to well
understand,
And to get, like us here now, some
holiday pleasure ;
For they do the work that enriches
the land.
No ! I don't care to rise for myself,
till I see
The rest get a chance, too, of rising
with me.

You're a Christian, sir ? Well ! so am
I, in a way,
Though some of our fellows, and good
fellows too,
Have no other gospel or God, as they
say,
Than Man, and what man's brain and
fingers may do.
I don't go with them, but I reckon my
trade
May be my church too, if the right
heart is there,
A-healing the wounds which the selfish
have made,
And helping the helpless their burden
to bear.
He is parson and priest, though his
apron be leather,
And he tuck up his shirt-sleeves to do
his job well,

Whose heart is most loving to sister and brother, Most ready to go where the sorrowful dwell, And to show to the erring the right way of truth, And bring them again to the faith of their youth. Now, the faith of my youth was that Christ would redeem The life of the poor from its sorrow and sin, Would wake up the world from its wealth-loving dream To seek the true riches of manhood within, In wisdom and worth, and the peace which they bring. That's the word which I heard from my old mother's lips; But now it's another guess-song that they sing, And the light of her heaven has all suffered eclipse. Oh, we boast that the poor man may rise in the world, And we point to his sons who are lords in the state, A-driving in carriages, scented and curled, Or making their bow to the Gold- Stick-in-Wait. And where shall you find, now, a sight that's so grand, Except in this truth-loving, Christ- serving land? Well, well! what rare tricks we do play, to be sure, With our conjuring cards, and our thimbles and peas! To think that a God could come here, and endure A cross to make lordlings and ladies like these,	And to leave all the rest of His brothers to pine! There's your thimble, and Christ in't; but presto! begone! Lo! the devil is there, where the glory divine A short while ago sat in sorrow alone! Oh blessed the poor—if they only get money; And blessed the meek—if they stand to their rights; And all who are selfish shall have milk and honey, For they are the salt of the earth and its lights! Ay! that's the new gospel, I call it, of Gold; But we working men will hold fast to the old. Yes, I know we're divided, as other folk are, And what is yet worse, we are cursed with that drink; And many are selfish, and some of us mar A good cause with bad ways, and some do not think; And we've blundered, 'tis true, and been wrong now and then, And done what we should not—as who has not done? But we'll learn by our failures; we're only poor men, Kept like children till lately, now trying to run; And sometimes, of course, we get tript up and tumble; But still on our clouds, lo! the rainbow is set, And a light springeth up in the hearts of the humble, Will grow to more fulness, and gladden us yet— But there! I've been preaching until I have got A drop in my heart that is bitter and hot.
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That's the way with all preaching ; it
 don't make one sweet.
 Where's Kate and the baby ? They'll
 put me all right.
 Oh, the ladies are praising its hands
 and its feet,
 And its mouth and its nose, and its
 precious eyesight !
 Well, well ! do you see, sir, that narrow
 green glen,
 With the strip of dark alders, that show
 where the stream
 Flows on in its loneliness far from men,
 And 'ripples, and murmurs like one in
 a dream ?
 I speak like a fool, for of course you
 can't hear it,
 Though I hear it singing away to itself,
 Or sobbing at times like a sore troubled
 spirit,
 Or laughing perhaps as it slides down
 a shelf ;
 I was born there, sir ; and we're going
 to try
 A week with old mother—Kate and
 baby and I.

LOST AND WON

BROKEN

SHE trusted him with her whole true
 heart,
 She trusted him as we trust in Heaven,
 Whatever they said, she took his part,
 And loved with the love to the noblest
 given.
 Oh, so deep as the water flows !
 Oh, so pure as the lily grows !
 But Love it is deeper and purer
 than they ;
 Well-a-day !

For him she left her father's Hall,
 And the happy life she had prized of
 old,

And with a light heart turned from all
 Who once had loved her, and now
 looked cold.

Oh, so deep, etc.

And by his side she shared his lot,
 And gazed on his face with a tender
 pride ;
 Poor they were, yet she murmured not,
 But with a smile would her troubles
 hide.

Oh, so deep, etc.

Ah ! had she died when her Love was
 young !
 For she trusted him, and he was not
 true :
 Oh that she had died ere her heart was
 wrung !

For there came a day when this thing
 she knew.

Oh, so deep, etc.

There came a day when a beam of light
 Searched his soul, and at length revealed
 Heart to heart, and she saw him right,
 And all the lie he had long concealed.

Oh, so deep, etc.

She read him clear as a printed book,
 And never a word to him she said ;
 But shot at him only a sorrowful look,
 As her heart sank in her, cold and dead.

Oh, so deep, etc.

Broken in faith and heart and mind,
 Yet no one knew it, but only he,
 For she was true to her womankind,
 And no one felt it, but only she.

Oh, so deep, etc.

She turned her from all joy and mirth,
 In wifely patience silent, pale,
 And cared no more for a thing on
 earth,
 But that dead love of her life to wail.

Oh, so deep as the river flows !
 Oh, so pure as the lily grows !
 But Love it is deeper and purer
 than they
 Well-a-day !

PARTED

Out of his life she passed,
 The one gold-thread that was there ;
 Out of his life at last
 She dropt with her burden of care—
 How had she ever come there ?

He was not worthy of love
 Such as she gave to him ;
 And yet, like the heaven above,
 She clasped with her light the dim
 World that was dear to him.

How could she so cast away
 The love that was born of God,
 The wealth in her heart that lay,
 On a man who only trod
 Mean ways that were far from God ?

His sorry heart she had taken
 For a nature noble and true,
 And slow was her trust to be shaken,
 Though colder ever he grew,
 The closer to him she drew.

And into his life she brought
 Some touches of tender grace,
 Some gleams of a nobler thought
 Redeeming its commonplace—
 Had he known his day of grace !

She had been to him like a song,
 And the song it was silent now,
 Or a stream that prattles along
 Where the life-roots feebly grow—
 And what was to come of him now ?

For he was selfish and cold,
 For he was earthly and hard,
 For in the guerdon of gold
 Only he sought his reward—
 Poor soul, so earthly and hard !

How could she give him her love,
 And he so unworthy of it ?
 What were the great gods above
 Thinking of there where they sit,
 When they sent her to fold him in it ?

Ah ! the gods know what they do,
 Whether giving or taking away ;
 They waste no life that is true,
 They lose no game that they play,
 And cast no blessing away.

For as she lay there in death,
 Lo ! for the first time he saw
 All her meek love and her faith,
 And there came sorrow and awe
 As its great beauty he saw.

Yea, there came sorrow and awe,
 As the gods entered his life,
 And the great word of the Law
 Cut to his heart like a knife,
 Seeing the shame of his life.

And he lay low on the earth,
 When from his side she had passed,
 Loathing all gladness and mirth,
 Loathing himself now at last,
 When from his life she had passed ;

Stricken in heart, as he thought
 Of the waste of her love and trust,
 Of the grace that to him she had brought,
 Of the glory he laid in the dust,
 When he slighted her love and her
 trust.

STRICKEN

Ah me ! he said, I do not mourn
 my loss ;
 I was not meet for such good company ;
 Thou all these years didst bear a silent
 cross,
 And it is right thou shouldst no
 longer be

Comrade to me.

I judge not others ; few so bad as I :
Enough to know my own poor little
heart,

As here in self-abasement now I lie,
And feel that it is best for thee thou art
From me apart.

O love ! my love ! and yet I wonder how
I dare to call thee love, who was not
true ;

Yet I did love thee, and I know it now
Too late, too late, when I can only rue
My way with you.

I was not always worldly, hard, and cold,
I can remember yet a better day
When love was dearer to my heart
than gold ;

My God, how could I cast it so away ?
Woe worth the day !

Ah me ! where now the visions of my
youth,

The nobleness, the glory of its dreams,
Its purpose high, its eager search for
truth,

Its hatred of the thing that only seems,
And falsely gleams ?

Where the fond hope of holy love
and pure,

That, in a cultured home, afar from
strife,

With patient service of the meek
and poor,

Reckoned to make a great and per-
fect life

With a sweet wife ?

Was it all an illusion—but a cloud,
Sun-painted in the morning, far away,
And filled with lark-songs, by and by
to shroud

With mist and drizzle all the dismal
day,

And mud-strewn way ?

Nay, but it might have been, it might
have been ;

'Twas I that failed, not nature that
deceives ;

Had I been faithful I had surely seen
The better hopes, for which my spirit
grieves,

Gathered in sheaves.

They are not false, those golden dreams
of youth ;

But we are false to them, and fall
away

From their high purpose, following
the smooth

World-lies that win us empty praise
and pay,

And lead astray.

They might have been, ah me ! they
might have been ;

And oh the sorrow to look back, and
know

They are not, and our life is poor
and mean,

Achieving only loss and empty show,
And shame and woe.

They might have been ? A woeful
word is this ;

I might have been a nobler truer man,
I might have laid up memories of
bliss,—

She would have helped, but sunless
now and wan

Is life's brief span.

And looking back, I see the morning
glory

Grown dim, and fading 'mid the
earthly smoke,

My fond dreams telling now a sorry
story

Of thoughts ill-marshalled, and the
battle broke

Without a stroke.

O heart, that was so rich in noblest
wealth
Of love and joy—to think I slighted
thee
O broken heart, erewhile so full of
health,
How in thy grief my bitter shame I
see! God, pity me.

HUMBLER

Why should I care to live another life,
When this is done?
I have not made so much of this first
spool
That I should crave for other lint or
wool
To be ill-spun:
O heart, my heart, have you not made
enough
Of this poor stuff?

Would I go on for ever, fain to weave
More of this gear—
More tangled thrums, more broken
ends of thought,
More snarled hasps, another hapless
knot
Of sorrow and fear?
An everlasting web of life like this,
Would that be bliss?

God help me! if I'm only just to do
As heretofore,
Better into a quiet grave to creep,
And lay me down in peace, and go to
sleep
For evermore:
Or better even right-off to be sent
For punishment.

Yes! I could find some comfort in the
thought
Of being scourged,
Were there but hope that this de-
filing sin

Which mars my life, and taints my
heart within
Could be so purged,
And I might live, in virtue of the rod,
The life in God.

It is a coward heart that shrinks
from pain,
But not from wrong;
Could I but hope to reach a purer air,
God, I would say, lay on, and do not
spare;
Smite hard and strong:
There are no pains that mortal men
inherit
Worse than I merit.

I had a grace that should have made
me great;
I had a love
Which should have made me loving,
and I thrust
The gift from me, and clave unto
the dust,
Till from above
God stretched His hand, and took
again to heaven
What He had given.

But oh, if in another truer world
We yet might meet,
As in the days that seem so long ago,
And I this wretched heart of mine
might throw
Down at her feet,
And say I wronged you, and I was
not true
To God or you!

Yes! I could live for such a day as that
With patient hope:
Would heaven but grant me opportunity
Of clear repentance which her eye
could see,
Then let me drop
Anywhere, out of sight, to live no more
As heretofore.

THE MAD EARL

AND that is our Earl—poor fellow!

I should not have known him a bit,
Had we met on a street: how he's
changed! to be sure, he had never
much wit,

But at least he was handsome, and now
he is bloated and brown as a toad,
And his brains gone to slush, like the
snow when a thaw comes down on
the road.

It is years now since I have seen him,
except in the woods far away
Pacing alone where the close trees
shut out the light of the day,
Shunning all speech of man, and still
more a woman to face;—

Ay, ay! the weird is upon him that
has to be dree'd by his race.

These grand old families now, there's
a story about them all—

A ghost-room, a tragedy somewhere,
a writing upon the wall;

Of course they are shy to speak of it,
but, on a winter night,

It's the talk of the cottage fireside, in
the dusk of the dim rush light.

They tell of the Statesman Earl—'twas
he made the house so great—

A shrewd-witted Parliament man, and
Councillor high of state—

How shifty and clever he was with
the turn o' the tide to swim,

And how when a Bisset or Cheyne
died, their lands fell somehow to him.

Folk called him the great lord Spider:
yet the small lairds still drew near,
And buzzed about him like flies, for
he was the big man here;

And play ran high in those days; you
might gamble a good estate

Between the wine and the dawn; and
his lordship's luck was great.

That's how the curse came on them—
that ne'er from his house should
depart—

A lord who was out of his wits, or a
lady who had not a heart,

For three generations coming; at
least, so the old wives said,

But maybe the woes of the house gave
rise to the weird they read.

Everything must have a reason; every
fire once had a spark;

And what like the judgment of heaven
for clearing up things that are dark?

None of his neighbours throve, and
none of his race had their wits:—

Easy to patch up a tale coming pat to
your hand so in bits.

Anyhow, certain it is that the States-
man Earl had a son,

A gallant and gay young soldier,
beloved of every one,

Till one day his charger stumbled, and
they picked him up for dead—

Better he had been, for henceforth he
never was right in the head.

Then followed this one's father; he
slobbered a deal at his meat,

His tongue was too big for his mouth,
and he shambled too with his
feet;

But he knew the right side of a penny,
and looked to his farms and woods;

Only nobody saw him at last, and
they say he had wild-beast moods.

But this Earl Ughtred, he looked right
as a man could be:

I knew him well as a boy, for he took
a rare fancy for me,

Chose me to go with him fishing, as
well he might, for I knew

More about trouting and fly-hooks
than idle keepers could do.

I was bred, you see, from a child on
the bank of his choicest brook,
And fished it with crooked pins, when
I knew ne'er a word of my book,
And my father too could busk you the
daintiest deadliest flies ;
And the young lord saw that I knew
the pools where the fish would rise.

And many a talk we had as we tramped
o'er the hills and the heather,
Or dropped the spoil in the creel, or
lunched on the banks together ;
And what would he not do for me,
when he came to man's estate ?
For still he would go off a-fishing, and
I must still be his mate.

A fine, frank lad, sir, he was ; and he
would have done all that he said ;
It was not his blame that he did not ;
but he never was strong in the head ;
He had not a turn for books ; and he
used to have dreamy moods ;
But his heart was sound at the core,
as the healthiest oak in the woods.

It's true, he turned wildish awhile—as
all of his race have done—
He was handsome and wealthy and
young, and guidance wise he had
none ;
I sometimes wonder myself, could I
carry a cup so full,
And not spill a drop by the way, but
keep my head steady and cool ?

By this time his father was dead, but
he never had been of much good ;
Vice was engrained in him, only he did
it as cheap as he could ;—
What little mind e'er he had—it never
was much to be sure—
Had been given to hoarding and hiding
the pennies he screwed from the
poor.

So Ughtred would not be like him,
would rather be lavish than mean,
And scatter his gold, like the best, where
the nobles of England were seen ;
Alike open-hearted and handed, had
he only the brains to know
Among all the ways that were miry
where was the safe one to go.

Wild, then, he was for a season—for-
sooth, he must bet and race,
Though he scarce knew a horse from
a cow, sir, unless she had horns to
her face ;
So the blacklegs got at him early, and
sold him the weediest screws
Which he backed, of course, at their
bidding, till he fell in the hands of
the Jews.

Then he got frightened, poor fellow,
and something or other he did—
I never could make out what—to men
of his order forbid ;
They did not say it was wicked, but
spoke of it as of a shame,
And the great folks pitied his mother,
and shook their heads at his name.

That don't go for much with me ; for
I've lived on their skirts all my days,
And I know that their honour allows
them to walk in the doubtfulest ways,
And I know that their honour forbids
what conscience does not refuse—
And he never was strong in the head, sir,
and he was in the hands of the Jews.

But it touched his mother ; who was
among us like a sov'reign law ;
Her pride was something the people
whispered about with awe.
And now to be pitied !—that made her
more haughty than ever before,
And she held up her head the higher,
and hardened her heart the more.

Then, his sister, the Lady Ion—she
just came of age that year—

A splendid creature to look at, but
also a woman to fear,

Features clear-cut as in marble, an eye
that was bright and cold,

And a perfect seat on the saddle—a
rider as cool as bold :

I was his lordship's servant, and it is
not for me to speak,

But the Book it says that the strong
should be helpful still to the weak ;

And if all the tales be true that came
from the big house then,

Better for him had he faced the wrath
and the scorn of men.

'Twas hard for her, I allow, to have
that shadow of shame

Cast on her morning sunshine, stigma
on her proud name ;

But he was the head of the house,
though ever so weak in his mind,

And they were strong and cruel, who
should have been strong and kind.

There was a girl that he fancied, sweet
as a rose in June,

All other girls in the county were only
as stars to her moon,

All other girls in the county were but
as weeds to the rose

That in the bloom of its beauty in
stateliest garden grows.

Her fathers were barons here, when
the great Earl's house was small

As the stable where their horses stood
champing each in his stall ;

It is not for me to say how, if certainly
ever I knew,

But slowly their acres had dwindled
as his lordship's acres grew.

But my lady and Lady Ion, they
would not hear of the match ;

They mocked at her as a cottar whose
door was shut on a latch,

For there was nothing to steal there,
but only a wax-doll face

Blooming on bread and milk, and just
fit for a milkmaid's place.

Ah ! pride, sir, is hard as flint, and
the sparks struck from it are hot,

Here and there flying unguided, to
burn where little you wot ;

They hurt not her in the least, but see
what they've made now of him,

Moping and mooning about here where-
ever the light is dim.

Then came the Colonist girl—that's
she who's her ladyship now—

That she had her wits about her was
writ on her sharp little brow ;

Pretty and clever enough, with a
glittering hard blue eye,—

Ay ! she would see to herself if her
face was not wholly a lie.

Colonial manners are frank ; she would
talk to any she met—

Cadger or molecatcher—free, as she
walked through the dry and the wet,

And oh but she won folk's hearts, for
she neither was haughty nor shy :

But I liked not the cold blue glitter of
steel that I saw in her eye.

She thawed the Dowager's frost—like
a breath of the coming spring,

And toned her speech till it seemed like
the songs that the spring-birds sing ;

What could she see in her now to
sweeten her manner so,

And make so much of a girl who was
hardly a lady, you know ?

Colonial girls are free, sir, and
colonial manners are frank,
But then colonial money is good as
the gold in the Bank ;
And she had dollars in millions to
patch the rents he had made,
Racing and betting, and learning the
way that the Hebrews trade.

The Dowager, then, looked sweet,
and the Lady Ion was bland,
As they led her over the Castle and
showed her the goodly land,
And they praised Earl Ughtred to her,
and the race from which he grew—
They were not clever perhaps, but
their hearts were good and true.

Meanwhile he mooned about: but
would sometimes go fishing with me,
And then he was like himself, and
would laugh with a boyish glee,
To hear the birr of the reel, or to
land his fish on the bank—
Till he turned him homeward, and then
his face looked weary and blank.

Well; one day she came up to me
with the daintiest rod and reel,
A casting-line twined round her hat,
and hung by her side was a creel,
Boots of porpoise leather, and petti-
coats not too long,
In trim for a day of sport, and hum-
ming an angler's song.

"I want you to take me with you,
and show me how you do ;
There's nothing our Earl now cares
for, except an outing with you ;
Of course, I am fishing for him, and
they too are fishing for me,
All the big house are in love with my
money, save only he.

I'm frank with you—that is my way ;
but really I like you, though
You neither like me nor trust me, as
well by your looks I know ;
And now you are wondering why I
am set on this weak-witted earl :—
As if strong-witted peers would look
at a mere colonial girl.

Now, I've told you the truth, will
you help me? These women will
drive him mad ;
Their nagging and sneering and mock-
ing have broken what spirit he had.
Folk talk of the fourth generation,
that it would bring back their wit—
I'm not superstitious, mind ye—but
what if there's something in it?

Most of the old stock here are need-
ing fresh blood in their veins,
And I'm sane enough to set up a score
of their weak scatter-brains ;
What say you?—might I not risk it
just on the chance that they
Might get a new start in life to go on
in a rational way?

You smile—it's a dubious smile, I've
noticed it often on you—
Oh, you do not trust me, I know, yet
you might, if you only knew ;
No matter ; you'll take me with you ?
I'll not spoil sport if I can,
I just want a lesson from you how to
manage a moody young man."

So we went off on our fishing, but our
sport was little that day ;
He was not once at his ease, and I
saw that he wished her away ;
Nor did she manage him wisely, she
had not the delicate touch,
As she chattered and laughed so briskly,
to know when it was too much.

Yet she meant well, I am certain ;
 meant landing her fish, if she could,
 But yet to make life to him brighter,
 and banish his gloomy mood ;
 And she bit her thin lip at the failure,
 when he went off in a dream ;
 That was the last time that ever he
 threw a gut-line on the stream.

How it came round then, I know not ;
 they wanted to wipe off the debt,
 And she with her millions of dollars
 would buy her an old coronet ;
 They settled it somehow among them,
 and got him to church one day,
 Where he stood like a man in a trance,
 but he said what he had to say.

The young folk travelled abroad for a
 time, as their way is, you know ;
 And the Dowager followed with Ion
 too, after a month or so,
 We heard of them sometimes in Paris,
 and then in Rome, for a while,
 By and by on the Rhine river, then
 off for a trip to the Nile.

At last, they came home, and were
 followed by visitors, princes and
 dukes,
 And priests with the subtlest smiles,
 and the sleekest of sidelong looks,
 Black - bearded foreign nobles, and
 their beardless foreign priests,
 And oh but there were rare doings
 with hunts and balls and feasts.

You see, if there was not an heir—as
 there did not seem like to be—
 Our young lady, she would be countess ;
 and now there was money to free
 Every acre of debt, and to leave the
 Australian girl
 Enough to maintain the state of the
 widow of Fingland's Earl.

That was a merry time then, they
 rode to the hunt by day,
 And kept up the ball till morning, or
 shuffled the cards for play,
 All but the Earl, and he went moping
 and mooning about,
 Alone in his dusky chamber, or alone
 in the woods without.

The young wife did as the rest, she
 rode to the Meet, at least,
 Saw them throw off, and then came
 ambling home with a priest,
 Chatted and laughed in the parlour,
 sailed through a waltz at the ball,
 And, thinking nothing of Ughtred,
 made herself pleasant to all.

So it went on, till a day when bills
 must be settled at last ;
 They had been falling like snow-flakes
 white on the old house cast,
 And duns had been prowling about it,
 threatening letters been sent ;
 What could it mean, these people
 growing so insolent ?

Where was the chamberlain ? Why
 had those men never been paid ?
 Where were the millions of dollars for
 which they had boldly played ?
 What had "my Lady" to do with it ?
 was not her money my Lord's ?
 Had she not titles and honours for her
 squatter father's hoards ?

Then they learnt what it meant, that
 glitter of steel in her eye ;
 Surely poor folk must be paid for the
 things that the rich folk buy,
 And her lady mother and Ion had
 ordered everything nice,
 And, of course, she had always
 supposed they were careful to count
 the price.

As for her money—her father, who honestly had come by it,
Had tied it up, every penny, as fast as the law could tie it;
Her marriage was not a joint-stock; each managed their own affairs;
Not a dollar of hers was Ughtred's, and never a penny was theirs.

Ay! they had met their match; it was even so as she said;
The lawyers had warned the Earl; but he never was strong in the head,
Folk even doubted, at times, if he knew what his marriage meant,
And as for the signing of papers—he had signed whatever was sent.

So she sat smiling there calmly, and spoke in the blandest way
Soft lisping words that were daggers; how could she know but that they—
She was but a squatter's daughter—had only to clap their hands,
And slaves would bring dresses and jewels, and horses and houses and lands?

But, of course, if their money was gone, they must live in a quieter way;
No ladies, as she supposed, would wear what they could not pay;
And she knew that one could be happy, as free from the burden of cares,
In a hut with a maid-of-all-work, as in a great castle like theirs.

Oh the glitter of that blue eye! yet it showed too a gleam of fun,
As she told them of mutton and damper and tea on her father's "run,"
Cooked by herself, with a wild Irish girl who saw to the fire;—
It was spiteful, no doubt; but the sketch was cleverly hit off by her.

What could they do? They might rage, but she shrugged her shoulders, and smiled;

If they could not pay their own tradesmen, why, then she had been beguiled;

She had known that he was not burdened with brains, nor in vigorous health, But she took all their stories for gospel, when they spoke of his greatness and wealth.

So the ladies and princes and dukes and priests all vanished like smoke,
And our clever colonial countess had all her own way with the folk,
And we soon had an orderly household, thrifty, yet stately withal,
And two years after the wedding there came a young heir to it all.

I think she had honestly tried to help the poor Earl in his fits
And moods, till it plainly appeared he was fairly out of his wits,
Harmless enough, but nothing was left of his brains but the husk,
And he muttered a deal to himself as he wandered about in the dusk.

I had not seen him for years, till I met him this evening, by chance,
In the wood, and as soon as he saw me, he looked with a furtive glance
This side and that, like a wild beast, to find what way he could go,
For we were on the narrow path 'tween the rock and the river below.

So he turned right round, and made for the beechwood, sir; but my stride
Is longer than his, and soon I was walking along by his side;
I hoped that my good Lord was well; and his folk would be glad to see
More of him now and then: and did he remember me?

We used to go fishing together ; and
would he not like now to try—
The stream was in beautiful trim—to
cast a line and a fly !

"I seem to have seen you before," he
knitted his brows, and said,
As if he were catching at something ;
"My friend, have you long been
dead ?

Why are you all so restless ? this place
now is haunted with ghosts ;
They come out singly by day, but at
night they are trooping in hosts ;
No one sees them, but I ; it's the
second sight, you know,
Sir Lachlan brought when he married
the heiress long ago."

Poor fellow ! He had been fumbling
a while with his seals and chain,
Still looking this side and that for a
way of escape, but in vain,
Till now when he suddenly plunged
down into a deep-sunk dell
Strewn with bracken and moss, where
the shy deer love to dwell.

I saw them leaping up near, and laying
their horns on their back
As they sought for a lonelier dingle,
while he went on in their track ;
And there was a lump in my throat,
sir, as I sat me down on a stone,
And heard him mutter and stumble
and still keep hurrying on.

Think of it, sir ; when you climb
there up to the top of the Ben,
Up through the oak and the pine
wood, and the birch and juniper, then
Up through the belt of heather, and
past where the moss only grows,
Till you reach the bare scalp of the
rock with its lichens and rifted
snows ;

And there as you stand, at last, look-
ing north and south and west,
Far as the eye can see from the crag
of the eagle's nest,
Cornland, woodland, moorland, every
acre is his,
And the villages down on the beach
where the wild wan water is :

And there are three old burghs too,
paying him stents and dues,
With hamlets maybe a score, and
farms and crofts and feus,
And over the highland border there
are miles of moor and moss,
You cannot see from the Ben, where
the deer their antlers toss.

And yonder he is, poor fellow, wander-
ing by night in the dew,
Hurrying by day through the thickest
shades of the pine and yew ;
It's Nebuchadnezzar once more
summering, wintering out
Among the black horned cattle, or
where the screech owls shout.

What a heritage that, sir ! a cup filled
up to the brim,
Yet never a drop can he taste, and it
stands there mocking at him !
There is my boy now, barefoot,
paddling about in the stream,
His life is a fact at least, but the
Earl's—it is only a dream.

What can you make of it, sir ? Is it
Fate, as the people aver ?
Our Lady is shrewd, and they tell me
the young Lord takes after her,
Is more of the squatter kind than the
noble of high degree,
But good at his books, and his
manners, like her, are frank and
free.

I have not much faith in weirds, though
 the Lord's law says, it is true,
 The third and fourth generation may
 reap the wrong that you do ;
 Yet God does not do much cursing,
 nor tie it in long entails,
 Not in the female line, but still to be
 heired by the males.

And I have some faith in Love, that
 it might have brought all right,
 As sunshine quickens the seed with its
 play of warmth and light ;
 Yet he never got much of that, sir,
 from sister, mother, or wife,
 And I cannot get over the thought,
 that they wasted a gentle life.

Never a pleasanter lad, sir,—nothing
 was wrong with him then—
 Cast e'er a line on the river, or stalked
 the red deer in the glen ;
 But they must thwart his first love,
 and none to give him had they—
 And then, forsooth, it was Heaven had
 taken his reason away.

Ay, ay ! God and heaven, it's little
 we heed their say,
 When good might come of our keeping
 the strait and narrow way,
 But they're handy to lay the blame on,
 when things go wrong at last,
 And you need a glisk of religion to
 glamour the days that are past.

PROVOST CHIVAS¹

COME, Martin, don't stand stiffly there ;
 Be seated now, and draw the chair
 A little closer to the fire ;

¹ The story of Peter Williamson revealed, in the last century, a strange tale of the kidnapping of boys in our towns by the magistrates and leading citizens, and sending them to the Plantations virtually as slaves. That is the origin of this poem.

It's winter weather, see, without ;
 And I would talk with you about
 Old days, before our day expire.

What will you take, now ? Nothing !
 nay,

I know what you are about to say ;
 You know your place : but that is
 pride—

You think you are quite as good as I ;
 And so you are ; there, don't be shy :
 Your place is here, man, at my side.

Look, Martin ; we are growing old :
 Why should you be so stiff and cold,
 And look as if you hated all—
 The wine, the table, and the seat,
 The Turkey carpet 'neath your feet,
 The very pictures on the wall ?

I stopt you on the high street once,
 But you—you gave me not a chance
 To tell you what was in my heart ;
 Though I was Provost at the time,
 You looked at me as if a crime
 Might bring me soon to the hang-
 man's cart.

And Bailie Webbe was at my side,
 And vowed for such contempt and
 pride
 He would have had you in the dock ;
 Of course, I did not dream of that,
 But yet you might have raised your
 hat,
 And done for once like other folk.

Nay, Martin, do not turn away ;
 Our day is short, our hairs are grey,
 It's time to grease our boots for going ;
 Why should we fall out, when we
 meet,

Like strange dogs snarling on the
 street ?

We have small space for quarrels
 growing.

I mind me, we were boys together ;
In summer's sun and winter weather
We padded, barefoot, to the school ;
Boys were not nice and dainty then
With shoes and hats like little men ;
They bred us on the Spartan rule.

As lads too we were seldom parted,
True friends and loving and one-
hearted,

Though now and then we had our
jars ;

Each night I would convoy you home,
Then back with me you needs must
come,

Talking of poetry and the stars,

Or of the sermon we had heard
On Sabbath from the Holy Word,
Or of the minister, good and true,
Who christened us, and made us sit
Together, when the time was fit,
Down at the holy table too.

Ay, ay ! It's good to think of these
Old days and high solemnities,
That linked us close when we were
youths :

Why should we not have many a walk
Together still, and cheerful talk
About these everlasting truths ?

Well, yes ; I grant the blame was
mine

At first, yet lately it was thine
Who would not help to heal the
breach :

And, man, it does not mend one's song
To know that one was in the wrong,
When friends went drifting out of
reach.

It could not well be helped, besides ;
This man must walk, while that one
rides :

And even the holy prophet says

That in this race of life, of course,
The footman runs not with the horse,
And so we took our several ways ;

And I grew rich, and you were poor ;
Yet you've the best of it, I'm sure,
My money, man, it's like a curse :
I wish you had it—no, I don't ;
For sure there is no blessing on't,
And it would only make you worse.

Yes, Martin, houses, lands, and gold
Bring little comfort when you're old,
Or honours which the world can give :
But you've had love to sweeten life,
A happy home, and faithful wife,
Though that wild laddie made her
grieve.

Now, do not sniff and sneer at me ;
Folk call me Lord by courtesy,
But not in scorn, nor yet in sport ;
Remember I've been Provost twice,
And given the government advice,
And was presented too at Court.

You should respect my office, even
If to the man may not be given
The honour which he thinks his due ;—
And for your son, no doubt, it's sad,
Although he was a worthless lad,
If all accounts of him be true.

They say he broke his mother's heart ;
They say that he was art and part
With them that robbed the County
Bank—

Well, well ; it's natural for you
To say that's false ; they say it's true ;
And sure enough he swore and drank.

Only a thoughtless boy !—more shame
To bring dishonour on your name,
And vex a mother fond and true !
And she was all that, I am told—
Indeed, I know—as good as gold ;
And such a comely woman too !

Ah ! Martin, you were fortunate
To find so excellent a mate ;
Though she is gone now, is she not ?
Gone to a better, happier land—
Give me a grip, man, of your hand ;
But death is our appointed lot.

Ay, ay ! this world is full of change ;
A tangled hank it is, and strange,
With ups and downs, and loss and gain,
And here to-day, and there to-morrow,
And nothing certain here but sorrow :—
Enough to puzzle heart and brain.

Nay, nay ; don't go yet, Martin, stay ;
You've heard about your son, you say ?
I'm glad of it for your sake, man :
But for this trumped-up story now,
It's quite absurd, you must allow,
And you must stop him, for you can.

He'll get into worse trouble yet
Unless he holds his peace on it,
I warn you fairly while it's time ;
They say that from his earliest youth
He ne'er was known to speak the
truth,
And was convicted once of crime.

That may be false, or may be true ;
But, Martin, I appeal to you :
You are a man of sense : just think !
To charge those men who represent
Order and law and government,
That they at any crime could wink !

The Provost, Bailies, City Clerk,
The men of highest rank and mark,
The rulers of your native town,
And men of Quality, beside,
Who shall be nameless, but are tried
And faithful servants of the Crown,

Was ever judge or jury yet
Could be persuaded these had set
Common and Statute law at nought ?

They're liker, man, to hold that he
Is guilty of lese-majesty—
And that's a grave crime even in thought.

It's true there were some gutter boys—
Rogues, always bent on thievish ploys—
Who, for the town's good and their
own,
Were 'prenticed to some honest men
In the plantations, now and then—
Good riddance too as can be shown.

And if you'll read them I will lend
The grateful letters that they send
About their happy life abroad,
With plenty wage, and plenty food,
And pious ministers and good
Who guide them on the better road.

'Twould do your heart, man, good
to read
What wholesome, useful lives they
lead,
Instead of prowling in the street,
Now begging bits, now stealing bits,
And living badly on their wits,
With ill-clad backs and ill-shod feet.

And for the Indians, now, they say
These hardly ever come their way,
And when they do, it is to truck
Powder and guns for beavers' skins,
And drops of drink for moccasins,
Or horns of buffalo or buck.

A better country theirs than ours
Where cadgers claim their rights and
powers,
And tinkers will have law on you !
I sometimes wish that I were there,
Free from the burden and the care
Of thankless work I have to do.

But for your son, you'll stop his plea ;
Of course, it's nothing, man, to me,
Although it's hard, when one is old,

To have been Provost once, and then
Be charged with stealing boys and men,
And selling them for lust of gold.

I'm glad for your sake that the lad
Turns up again, though he was bad
Before, and seems no better now ;
But if he will persist to blame
His betters, there's against his name
Enough to hang him yet, I trow.

Just tell him, if he'll hold his peace,
And bid that lawyer's "clavers" cease,
Who says whate'er he's paid to say,
The town wants someone to engage
For little work and plenty wage,
And I might put it in his way—

A bribe ! no, no ; it is not fit
That you should look that way at it ;
Martin, you pull me up too short :
I only meant, if he should want
A job of work—and work is scant—
It's well to have a friend at Court.

And he must choose between this
chance
And being led a bonny dance,
Through courts of Law, for crimes
and debts,—
Hame-sucken, stouthrief, common
theft,
Smuggling, and heavy claims he left
For gambling and horse-racing bets.

Or man or boy, it matters not ;
These pleas against him will be brought,
And there's a long purse too behind ;
Think ye that Provost, Bailies,
Clerk
Will let a messan-dog come bark
Right at their heels, and never mind ?

It is not reason, man : be sure
They'll play their game, and find a cure
For their hurt honour at any cost ;

They'll plea it in the inner court,
They'll plea it to the last resort
Before they let the game be lost.

Law is the hardest mill to grind,
Nor is it water, man, or wind,
But gold that makes its wheels to go,
And ere the Inner House we're
through,
I doubt it will be hard for you
A plack or penny more to show.

But you can stop it if you will ;
And maybe manage even to fill
The purse which it would empty soon :
Now, do not play the fool, and rob
Your age for such an idle job,
Which is like reaching for the moon.

I do not say the thing was right
Exactly, now I have more light,
Though no one blamed it at the time ;
The very ministers would say,
Each time the laddies went away,
It saved them from a life of crime.

We gave them clothes, we gave them
meat,
And shoes and stockings for their feet,
Which seldom they had known before :
We saw too their indentures writ,
And signed and sealed as sure as wit
Of man could do. What could we
more ?

And when the ship would sail away,
We had a minister to pray
With the poor laddies, as was right.
And oh, how earnest they would plead
That waifs and prodigals, the seed
Of righteous men, might yet get light !

And now to charge us with offence,
Because we made, perhaps, some
pence—
It was a trifle at the most—

Clearing our streets of rogues and thieves

Who grew there thick as Autumnleaves
That from November woods are tossed!

Think, Martin; to be charged with crime,

I who have lived here all my time,
Respected in my native town!

And, maybe, see my little gear,
Gathered through many a busy year,
Escheated some day to the Crown!

That's hard, you surely must allow:
And all for what? Just tell me how
Was I to know these Chippeways—
Incarnate fiends!—would hack and hew,

And burn and torture, as they do:
That is, if all is true he says?

Nay, Martin, do not look like that,
And knit your brows, and grip your hat;
Well; yes, it's true that I did make
Some statement once about your child—
For I with rage and fear was wild—
And maybe it was a mistake.

I wronged him? yes; he may have been

All that you say; for I am clean
Distraught and maddened now about
This business; will you not have pity?
'Twill bring shame on your native city:
And you could easily pull us out.

Give me some drink, then, if you'll not
Take it yourself: it's some I got
To toast our friendship once again;
But that, it seems, is not to be—
My hand is shaking: let me see,
What was I saying?—Yes, it's plain:

You mean to plea this case, and I
Will fight it, till the day I die,
Through Outer House and Inner
House,

And House of Lords, though there
should be

No more of all my property
Than might give house-room to a
mouse.

It's war—and all is fair in war:
Things can't be worse than now they
are;

And you and yours what should I heed?
I'm to be once more Provost soon,
And we'll all sing the self-same tune,
For all the Council are agreed.

We will not brook this scaith and
shame,

We will not lose our own good name,
For vagabonds and gutter bairns,
The town is better far without;
And he is like the rest, no doubt,
Of no more use than bracken ferns.

Ay! leave me now: I tell you true,
It shames me to have bowed to you,
A fellow poor as any rat,
Who thinks to fight the Clerk and me,
The Bailies, too, and Quality,
With such a trumpery tale as that!

I thought at first you had some heart,
Some sense, at least to play the part
Which any man of judgment would:
But there: I'm done with you: away!
You'd better make friends while you
may,

You'll need them, for our names are
good.

There's Little-mills and Chokit-burn,
Woodside and Tarvet, Drums and
Durn

And Beeswood, too, and Otterslack,
And Bailie Webbe, and Bailie Sym,
And the Town Clerk—take note of
him—

He has the bank, too, at his back.

And you would mell with all of these !
 Man, saw ye ever a skep of bees
 O'turned, and how they buzz and
 sting :

I pity you, with such a crew
 Upon you, and the lawyers too,
 And all the heavy costs they bring.

Take thought, e'en yet, while it is time:
 It's a grave thing to charge a crime
 On honest men and Magistrates :
 Better your son had never come
 Than bring such ruin on your home,
 And also waste our braw estates.

Remember all our early days,
 Remember all our kindly ways,
 Remember that bit post of profit,
 With little work and plenty wage :
 I think I almost might engage
 That you should have refusal of it.

You will not? Nay, then, off with
 you !
 And do the worst that you can do ;
 I've been too humble to you, sir.

(*Solus.*)

Woe's me ! the house and land and
 gear,
 And Provost's chain and badge next
 year !
 And oh, 'twill make an awful stir !

MORGANA

Oh, green are the pines of the Barley-
 wood,
 And the drooping birches are fair to see,
 And bonnie the carpet that summer
 weaves
 Of the green overlapping bracken
 leaves ;
 And the spring bluebell and anemone
 You might bind up there in sheaves.

And blythe are the birds in the Barley-
 wood,
 Where merle and mavis and woodlark
 sing,
 And the cushat croodles high unseen,
 And the cuckoo calls from the bracken
 green ;
 And sweet are the smells that the
 wind-wafts bring,
 When the morning airs are keen.

But woe is me for the Barleywood !
 There's a pang in my heart for every
 tree,
 And for every bird in the wood that
 dwells,
 And for every waft of the woodland
 smells ;
 The pang of a cruel memory
 For all its buds and bells.

For fairest things may dreariest be,
 And sweetest of songs most sad to hear,
 When tree and blossom and bird and
 flower
 All link them on to a woeful hour,
 And bring the past and its sorrow near
 The heart to overpower.

There were two lovers that sought
 my love—
 Ay me ! but it's ever so long ago—
 One was beautiful, young and brave,
 But the other was noble and rich
 and grave :
 And how should a silly young maiden
 know
 Fittingly to behave ?

I had no mother to guide me right—
 Ah, woe ! for a thoughtless girl like me !
 And my father he left me all the day,
 And went to his sleep in the evening
 grey ;
 And how should a foolish maiden see
 Rightly to guide her way ?

I loved my beautiful youth and brave—
 Lack-a-day ! I was still in my teens—
 Yet I longed for the wealth and the
 noble name,
 But I had not a thought of sin or shame ;
 And how should a girl know what it
 means
 To keep from evil fame ?

My Lord, he came, when the day
 was high—
 And oh but the hours went heavy and
 slow—
 But my Love stole quietly up to my side,
 And low at my feet in the evening
 sighed,
 And then would the hours like minutes
 flow
 In the happy eventide.

My Lord, he would hold my worsted
 hank,
 Pleased when my needle was briskly
 plied ;
 But my Love would not hear of work
 to do
 When he was with me, and well he knew
 To make the happy hours swiftly glide
 With love that was always new.

And close to his heart he clasped me
 once—
 Oh what so sweet as a love-embrace ?
 My Lord, he would only touch the tip
 Of my little hand with a dainty lip,
 And then smile prettily into my face,
 And let the little hand slip.

But my love he clasped me once and
 twice—
 How I thrilled all through in his fond
 embrace !
 And he vowed, if ever my Lord should
 dare
 To hold me so, that he did not care
 What might happen of foul disgrace,
 He would not leave me there.

I wist not then what his words might
 mean,
 But oh his look it was fierce and wild,
 It frightened me so, that I bade him go :
 And my Lord he spake to me sweet
 and low,
 Next day and next, and I heard and
 smiled,
 And did not say him No.

But by and by a low whisper ran—
 It should have blistered every tongue—
 Ran through the evil-speaking place,
 Whisper wicked of foul disgrace :
 And I so simple and pure and young !
 Oh it was vile and base.

He was a villain, I said, and lied—
 Ah me ! what can a poor girl do ?—
 He lied, he lied : I had nothing to hide ;
 Yet, he struck me down there by his
 side,
 Pierced my heart with a falsehood
 through :
 Oh how the villain lied !

My Lord, he came of a noble race,
 And yes ! his heart it was noble too ;
 Lo ! now, he said, this lie has gone
 All through the city, and there are none,
 But only I, that believe in you,
 And still keep loving on.

But I have trusted you, and I trust—
 I took his hand, and I kissed it then—
 Yes, I trust, for I know you true,
 And I should die if I doubted you ;
 And I scorn the women and viler men
 Who lie now as they do.

Then let the wedding bells ring out,
 And let the priest make haste and come ;
 Our name was ever without a stain,
 And they will tattle and talk in vain,
 When we to the altar go, and home
 Return together again.

It was a hard and a cruel place,
Where every man of his neighbour
spoke,
And evil report of sin or wrong
Grew louder still as it went along,
Till on some happy life it broke,
And silenced its happy song.

Had I only thought! But my heart
was hot;

I am certain now that he was belied,
For there were women that hated me
Because men said I was fair to see;
And women will humble woman's pride,
False as the tale may be.

But I was mad: and I said, he lies;
Oh is there none who will take my part?
Were I a man, I would lay him low,
And who shall give him a right death
blow,

Him I will love with all my heart
For slaying the villain so.

Slowly, slowly my Lord he rose—
And oh but he looked grave and sad:
And he bent him low, and he went
his way,

Never a word then did he say,
And my heart leaped up, and I was glad,
Until the close of day.

But all that night I found no sleep,
Tossing in restless, troubled thought;
I said I would love my Lord truly
and well,

I said I was happy; and yet there fell
Such gloom on my heavy heart as
brought

Horror on me like hell.

All through the night I lay, and tossed,
Wearily longing for the day,
And rose at dawn in a troubled mood,
And hied me away to the Barleywood,
And through its dewy glades took my
way,

Where the air was fresh and good.

Sweet smelled the pines of the Barley-
wood,

And oh I shall never forget the birds,
They gathered about me, and had
no fear,

And sang the thought of my heart
as clear

As if they were speaking it out in words;
His lie shall cost him dear!

And I too sang, yet I was not glad;
I said I was, but it was not so:

I sang as the mad folk I have known
Sing, when their heart is like a stone,
But I could have wept with joy to know
No fell deed had been done.

Just then, and ever so near, I heard—
Ah me! how they ring in my heart
this day!

Two shots, and a thud on the dewy
grass—

O heart! my heart, how it sank, alas!
Oh cruel madness, and evil day
That brought this thing to pass!

Well did I know what had befallen—
As well as if I had seen it all:

Great Lords have a steady hand and eye,
They sleep, and they do not fear to die:
But my young Love for sleep would
call,

And it would not come nigh.

Well did I wot what had befallen—

As well as if I had seen it all;
And out of the wood I rushed, and there
My Love lay dead in the morning air,
Close by the mossy brambly wall,
Upon the moorland bare!

I fell on him, and I clasped him close—
Oh how the love of him all came back!
Men were near me, standing about,
But I only saw the blood oozing out
From his dear mouth in a thread-like
track,

That killed all hope and doubt.

Beautiful there in death he lay,
 But ah the cold damp on his brow !
 Oh my beautiful, young, and brave !
 I—it is I that have dug your grave !
 And oh that I were but with you now !
 For Death is the boon I crave.

I kissed his mouth—I kissed his
 cheek—
 O Love, my love ! I wildly cried :
 The red blood stained my mouth
 and chin,
 And the stain of it was on my soul
 within ;
 For I was his murderer : yes, he lied :
 But oh my sin, my sin !

It was in the madness of Love he lied :
 And I—I loved him in spite of it :
 Come back, my Love : come back,
 my Life :
 Will none of you thrust in my heart a
 knife ?
 For I surely might overtake him yet,
 And be his own true wife.

He lied, but I would have done it too,
 Had he been false to his love and me ;
 Leave us here : how I hate you now ;
 There's a lock of fair hair on his brow—
 I have curled it oft on my finger ; see
 It knows my finger now :

Oh I would not give that lock of hair
 For all your lordship and your land :
 But bury us both together here ;
 And come not hither to drop a tear,
 You who slew him with your hand,
 And me with the murderous cheer.

Mad I was and unjust to him—
 What would you have from a breaking
 heart ?
 He was too noble to take it ill ;
 Besides, they hurried him down the hill,
 And far away to a foreign part
 Where he is wandering still.

They made a bier of the green pine-
 boughs—

Ay me ! the Barleywood pines are
 sweet !

A bier for him and a bier for me,
 For I was as like to death as he,
 And they bore us down to my Father's
 seat,

A woeful sight to see.

Yet I lived on, who would have gone
 So glad with my love to his early rest ;
 My hair grew white, but not with years,
 And I lived down all their lies and
 sneers,

But with a heavy heart in my breast,
 And many sighs and tears.

Never I saw my Lord again,
 Never I wished to see his face ;
 Yet he was sure of a noble strain,
 Trusty and true ; but it would be pain
 Recalling the tale of foul disgrace,
 And all that past again.

One thing only has made me glad—
 After the healing mercy of God—
 The day of the Duel now is past ;
 And never shall maiden stare aghast,
 As I did then, on the blood-tinged sod
 Where my dead Love was cast.

MRS. COVENTRY

WHISHT ! John ; why should you aye
 complain

Of trade and profits being bad,
 And cry about your little gain,
 And moan at every loss you've had ?
 You have more money than you know
 What to do with, man. God has blessed
 Your labour, and you ought to show
 His bounty has not been misplaced.

Sometimes I almost pity Him,
 Sometimes I'm clean ashamed to pray,
 Seeing our cup filled to the brim,
 And so much goodness thrown away !
 It must be hard to bear, I think,
 To be replenishing folk's store
 With wealth of clothes and meat and
 drink,
 And hear them crying still for more.

It's easier learning how to win,
 Than how to use, wealth as we should :
 And though we gain it without sin,
 It's sin to have, and do no good
 With what we have ; and, what is worse,
 It eats the heart like rust or rot :
 Think, now, if there should be a curse
 Wrapt up in every hoarded note.

When we were young, John, we were
 poor,
 And yet we were far richer then ;
 We sent no beggar from the door,
 Nor grudged the wage of working men :
 We had enough, and some to spare
 For them that were worse off than we ;
 And there was sunshine in the air
 Each night when you came home to me.

But now the pocket's buttoned up,
 The beggar comes not to our door,
 He knows there's neither bite nor sup
 For tramps, as used to be before :
 Ah well ! maybe they're mostly rogues :
 There were rogues too when we were
 young,
 Yet none were driven away like dogs ;
 And even tramps' hearts may be wrung.

There's none will speak to you as I
 Am free to do, who love you best :
 I dare not flatter you, and lie
 With a false heart upon your breast.
 And, O John, but your wealth has made
 A hard bit on that breast for me,
 That does not give an easy head,
 And is not as it used to be.

O ay ! you give me all I need,
 And more than all I care to get
 For gowns and gawds, and meat to feed
 Us all, and ne'er to be in debt ;
 There's plenty on ourselves to spend,
 E'en more, I think, than's good for
 health ;
 But, think ye, was that God's chief end
 In giving you that heap of wealth ?

I've heard you say it's hard to find
 Investmentssafe—and thought that odd :
 But here is one just to your mind,
 A good investment, John, with God :
 They never lose who lend to Him,
 They get good interest, indeed ;
 And that poor man who broke his limb,
 Has five wee, helpless bairns to feed.

Nay do not grudge it, man : God loves
 A cheerful giver : e'en be glad
 That you can help the bonnie doves
 Left hungry there at home and sad—
 There ; take it back ; I want to get
 A blessing for you, John, from heaven ;
 But they who grudge to pay their debt
 To God, shall find no blessing given.

We have no bairns at our fireside ;
 God would not send His children here
 To folk whose hearts are full of pride,
 And set on hoarding worldly gear.
 They'd only learn, what makes them
 worse,
 To hanker for the gold they see :—
 No ; this is not a house to nurse
 God's little ones, as they should be.

And who's to heir it all, since we
 Are childless ? Is it not a sin
 To leave a fruitful legacy
 Of quarrels to the next of kin,
 When we could gladden many a home,
 And brighten many a sunless life,
 And lift up for the days to come,
 Maybe, some hapless child or wife ?

How freely, John, we used to give
To every holy cause and good,
When it was hard enough to live,
For then you would do as you should ;
The Kirk was never then forgot,
You never did neglect the poor,
You pitied too the sick man's lot,
And sought his comfort and his cure.

Yet then your mite was more to you
Than is your five-pound note to-day,
For there was something you must do
Without, to give the mite away ;
You wore the old coat for a time,
That some one might get warmth from
you ;
And I—I thought the old coat sublime,
Because the heart beneath was true.

O John, this big house, and the host
Of lazy servants, full of meat,
And carriages and horses cost
The poor what they have need to eat :
And cost you too ; you used to speak
Of books, and made me blythe and gay,
But now it's funds through all the week,
And markets even on Sabbath day.

And you must buy a fine estate,
And shoot your rabbits and your hares,
And dine and visit with the great,
And sometimes even put on their airs,
And send your poachers to the gaol,
And set your keepers o'er the fish :—
O man, can ye forget how well
Ye liked to catch a dainty dish ?

That's a braw greenhouse ; and it's true
I like the bonnie flowers ; but yet
You made me happier, John, when you
Brought me the box of mignonette.
The greenhouse speaks to me of gold,
And it may bide, or may depart ;
But still I keep the box that told
About the kind and thoughtful heart.

O man, let 'Change and Market be !
Let others get their turn ; and come,
Just think how pleasant 'twere to see
Once more the old sweet kindly home,
To read together in the mirk,
Together mercy to invoke,
To walk together to the Kirk,
And do some good to other folk.

I'm weary of this grand display,
And hearing of the rise and fall
Of prices ; would I were away
From ships and yarns and funds and all :
Oh, if the Lord would only take,
And lift our hearts to things above !
Or else some bank, perhaps, would break
And leave us nought but health and love ?

MOTHER AND STEP- MOTHER

OH my baby, my sweet, my Own !
Oh joy, to have one to love like this !
And love like this to be so bestown !
Oh the wonder of it, and bliss !
Look at me, baby, with those deep eyes,
Smile to me, baby, with those soft lips !
Oh, the tremulous thrills that rise
At the fine touch of those finger-tips !

And yet you fill me with fear and awe,
God's little child, that He gave to me
To rear you up in His Love and Law,
For the life that is, and that is to be ;
Lo, Heaven is looking out from the
blue

And solemn depths of those great eyes ;
How shall I keep you pure and true ?
How shall I make you good and wise ?

I promised to mother those babes of his,
And oh, I have tried to pay my vow ;
But I did not know what a mother is,
I did not know as I know it now.

I loved them for his sake, and always
will ;

Poor motherless babes, I love them yet ;
But motherless babes they must be still,
For I cannot love them like you, my pet.

They're very nice, and they've been
so good,

And they really are fond of me, as
they say ;

But they're not like my blossom of
ladyhood,

And they have not their father's gentle
way.

No doubt, they take after the mother,
and she

Was vulgar—her picture shows that
right ;

And there's something in them—it is
plain to see

They never will grow to be ladies quite.

Well, yes ; she was pretty, and so
are they ;

She has sandy curls, and she wears
a wreath,

And her eyes are meaningless, cold
and grey,

And her lips are parted to show her teeth.
She has dumpy hands, but she thinks

them fine—

It's all in her picture, baby, dear—

And the painter has hinted a sullen line
Across her brow, with a shade of fear.

I often look at that picture now
Which hangs in the nursery, as it
should,

And I watch for the faint line on
the brow

When her children are ever in angry
mood ;

I never have seen it, I'm bound to say,
Though it may come yet, as they

grow old ;

Still I never have seen it, and never
may,—

Yet these things run in the blood,
I'm told.

He does not speak of her much to me,
Though he does to his children, which

is right ;
I tell him to do it, and sometimes he

Sits by their beds, and talks at night.
For oh, were I taken, my pet, from

you,
I should like you to hear of me from

your father ;—
Should I like him to give you a step-

mother too ?
Nay, let us die together rather.

I talk to you, baby, as I can
Unto no other but you, my pet :

There's a nook in my heart which my
own good man—

And he's very good—has not been
in yet :

It is there where I think of his former
wife,

And the picture up in the nursery,
And wonder if they had peace or strife,

And if he could love her as he
loves me.

O baby ! it's hard to fill my post !
But yes ! I will love her children

more ;
They shall not feel that for you they

lost
One touch of the love that they had

before.
I cannot give them my own baby's part,

That's yours, my darling, whatever
befall ;

But oh, your coming has filled my
heart

More and more with the love of all.

BAILIE BUTTERS AND
YOUNG DINWOODIE

Two men in a cosy Hostel sitting
By a sea-coal fire, in a cheerful light,
While past the window were shadows
flitting

Through the fog of a dull November
night,

Were cracking their walnuts after dinner,
With dry-palate olives to flavour the
wine,

Hardly feeling like saint or sinner,
But that it was good for a man to dine.

One was a smooth, smug, florid, pot-
bellied,

Clean-shaven man, of a portly mould,
With tremulous cheeks, as if nicely
jellied,

And coloured with port-wine rich
and old;

The other an Exquisite, long-limbed,
sprawling

Low on an easy soft-cushioned seat,
Lisping his words, and slowly drawing
Thoughts that ran on at a fever-heat.

Quoth the pot-bellied one: "You were
saying

Life's not worth living; you're wrong,
sir, quite:

This world, though it's not just for
idling and playing,

Is the best of all worlds if you take
it right.

It is not the heaven folk see before 'em,
When they fall in love at a country
dance,

But I've seen more than you of its
variorum,

And I'd live it again, if I had the
chance.

Not worth living, sir! If you are
sober,

Honest and willing to do its work,

Hating a rogue and a thief and a robber,
And playing a fairly good knife and
fork—

For I admit that if one is dyspeptic,
He cannot well live as a good man
should:

His bad digestion will make him sceptic
Of all that is happy and right and
good—

But let him be sober and prudent and
willing

To work, as he should, till his sixty
years,

With his wits about him to turn a
shilling,

And know a good thing, when his
chance appears,—

Let him be civil, and follow the leading
Of common sense just, whatever he's at,
And his life shall be pleasant as novel-
reading—

And I am myself now a proof of that.

I was poor enough when I was a
lad, sir;

Hadn't a copper for some folk's pound;
Yet most of them, by and by, went to
the bad, sir,

And God knows where they are now
to be found;

But I worked at anything that was
going,

And I saved up every penny I could;
And my ventures grew as my cash was
growing,

And whatever I promised, my word
was good:

Yes! I was poor, when first I started,
And should have been poor still,
according to you,

If God does not care though we're all
broken-hearted,

But just goes His own way whatever
we do;

Yet here I am, sir ; I'm nobody's
debtor,
And I lay a calm head on my pillow
at night,
For God has been good—He could
scarce have been better—
To order things rightly, because I
did right.

Now if I had taken to gambling and
drinking,
Do you think I should be where I
am to-day
With funds in the Bank and the Stocks
—though they're sinking
Almost a quarter, I'm sorry to say?—
Never, sir. But there's a God up
in heaven
Who always takes care of respect-
able folk ;
And what better proof of it could there
be given?—
I feel that my faith is placed firm
on a rock.

I had not a shilling once ; but I
determined
That I would take warning by what I
had seen ;
And look to me now : not a judge
ever ermined
Drinks better port wine, with a
conscience more clean ;
My wife is a model ; my children are
pictures ;
My business is thriving ; my home,
come and see
How its happiness wholly refutes all
your strictures,
And tells a plain tale for my Maker
and me.

Oh, I'm grateful to Him ! Yes ; of
course, I've had losses ;
There is no life without ups and downs
here below ;

But mine have been mostly benevolent
crosses,
Where the balance came right, as the
ledgers will show.
So in me He finds nothing but thank-
fulness truly
That I am not like some who have
wasted His gift,
That I never gave way to a passion
unruly,
And when things at the worst were,
I always made shift

To believe in His providence ; and I
have seen it,
For every thing throve with me well
from the first ;
I am sure not an hour of my life, or
a minute,
But He faithfully saw to my hunger
and thirst.
But it all depends, sir, on doing your
duty,
And carefully laying your doubts on
the shelf,
And keeping your head clear of
women and beauty,
To make it the best of all worlds—
for yourself."

To him then, the Exquisite : " Ah,
it is pleasant
To meet, now and then, an exceptional
case,
A man who is really content with
his present,
Content with himself, and his prize in
the race :
Not that I think, now, you should be
contented ;
I could not, though I had your luck,
sir, instead
Of the emptiest life that was ever
invented ;
But I call no one happy, until he
is dead.

You've not seen the end yet. The
cup running over
May be dashed from your lips, and its
treasures all spilt :
Most likely it will ; and your friend
then and lover
Will look on your trouble as if it
were guilt.
We are playthings of Nature, and
Nature is cruel ;
She mocks us with favours to break
our hearts worse ;
To-day, she adorns us with some
precious jewel,
To-morrow, the jewel of life is its
curse.

We have pure thoughts of love, we
have high thoughts of goodness,
We glow with fine feelings, and call
them divine,
While Nature is raging in wrath, or in
lewdness,
And planning an earthquake, or twist-
ing the spine.
And why has she made us so, but for
the keen edge
Which conscience can put on the pain
we must bear ?
And we fondly look on to a happy
serene age,
While she has made sure of its sorrow
and care.

Oh, your life has been filled full of
mercies and blessings,
Wife and children and all that your
heart can desire ;
Your God whom you trust has been
kind and caressing,
And how can you praise Him enough
and admire !
Well ; I hope it may last, sir ; but
sometimes one's children
Have broken the hearts that they once
made so glad—

I don't say yours will ; but it's rather
bewildering
When our mercies turn out the worst
ills we have had.

You think it's all goodness that sends
you your treasures ;
And yet your heart sinks at a fall in
Consols,
And there is a bitter drop mixed in
all pleasures,
And there is a vague longing still in
our souls :
Why can this Goodness not heartily
give us

What cannot be lost, and what fills up
our peace ?
And why does He grudge all at once
to relieve us,
And bid fear and trouble and sorrow
to cease ?

Was it Goodness that fashioned the
tiger ? and hollowed
The fang of the cobra that bites in the
dark ?

And what was the fond line of thought
which it followed
When it planted the teeth in the jaws
of the shark ?

Or the love that created those lizards
and dragons,
And mail-clad the fishes, when earth
was but slime !

It could wait through long æons for
ploughshares and waggons,
But for carnage must not lose a
moment of time !

We blame our fierce soldiery lusting
for battle,

We number their slain with a horror
aghast,

We mourn the waste land, without
homestead or cattle,

Through which the fell march of their
armies has past ;

Yet what have they done but what
 Nature is doing
 On a yet grander scale all the days
 and the years,
 For she either is battling, or else is
 renewing
 Her strength for the war, with its
 woes and its tears.
 Just look at the ants on their slave-
 stealing forays ;
 What goodness and mercy impel them
 to go ?
 Or gaze on the tender young lambs in
 the corries
 As the ravens scoop out their meek
 eyes in the snow :
 And perhaps it was love armed the
 midge and mosquito
 That curse the bright warm summer
 day to us all,
 And the wasp and the hornet are
 owing to it too,
 And the centipede hid in the old
 mossy wall.
 Nay, but Nature is fierce, sir, and false
 too, and cruel,
 And all through her realm there is
 war to the knife,
 All through her years runs the long
 deadly duel,
 The constant un pitying battle for life.
 And what is such life worth ? and
 what of its donor ?
 When each creature takes what advan-
 tage he may
 Of cunning or sickness, and no laws
 of honour
 Can stay the fierce hunger, or shelter
 the prey ?
 Oh, it's not so with man, is it ? He
 has a higher
 And nobler law which he is bound
 to obey ;
 Though sprung from the brute, it is
 his to aspire

To a grander and happier life than they !
 A happy life !—gout-racked or tossing
 in fever ;
 A noble life !—scrambling for pence
 in the mire ;
 Oh, you pity the poor Chartist cobbler
 or weaver,
 But you leave him for all that to pine
 by the fire !

And then, sir, what need of our huge
 grated prisons,
 Our gibbets and soldiers and batoned
 police,
 And other the like most convincing of
 reasons
 In the best of all possible worlds like
 this,
 But that the stronger would keep down
 the weaker,
 But that the cunning would outwit
 the fools,
 But that the poorer of us and the
 meeker
 Must needs be their victims, or else be
 their tools ?

Well ; but here is a manor-house,
 yonder a palace,
 Or a lot of trim villas—sure God
 must be good !

Ay ; but what of the millions in
 closes and alleys
 Scant of all raiment and light, sir,
 and food,
 And the babes that are suckled on
 whisky or fever,
 And the girls that ne'er knew a
 maiden's pure thoughts,
 And the pains and the aches that the
 Bountiful Giver
 Dispenses as freely as dust and motes ?

No, it is not worth living, this hard
 life of sorrow ;
 But there is no other, and we must
 bear on,

Toiling to-day without hope of to-morrow,
 Weary and dull till the light is gone.
 I once held with you, sir; trying to dream on,
 In spite of the facts, in a fool's paradise;
 But if there's a deity, sure he's a demon
 Who wrings us with anguish, or tempts us with vice.

Well spoke the wise Greek in his tragic elation,
 As he pictured the brave heart Fate held in his mesh,
 Hurling his scorn at the gods and salvation
 With the spikes of the Caucasus piercing his flesh.
 High-souled the Greek was, moral and fearless,
 And his gods must do right: or his soul would rebel;
 But we must be weak when our life is most cheerless,
 With a lie in our mouth saying, It is all well."

So they sat there—the two of them—
 talking and drinking,
 And eyeing the ruby light-gleam of the wine,
 Well pleased with their talk, for they thought they were thinking,
 And each deemed that he did the secret divine;
 And each took his bottle there, pleasant and merry,
 And each with an easy mind then had his nod.
 And which was the best judge of claret and sherry?
 And who of the twain was the farthest from God?

Oh best of all worlds for the selfish and shifty,
 Thou art not so good for the noble and true;
 Oh life well rewarding the prudent and thrifty,
 How shall the Christ-spirit travail with you?
 Oh worst of all worlds to the proud heart and faithless!
 And yet thou canst perfect the meek and the brave;
 Strange, sorrowful life that in dying is deathless,
 Glory and majesty, found in a grave.

Evil the world is; Life a long battle,
 Wrestle with anguish, and warfare with sin,
 Proving the heart of us, trying our mettle
 By troubles without us and terrors within;
 And yet 'tis worth living, to-day and to-morrow,
 The life which God lived in the wealth of His love,
 Life He made perfect in patience of sorrow,
 God-life on earth like the God-life above.

DEACON DORAT'S STORY

THIS is the saw that cut him down,
 The last in our place that was hung in chains,
 Left to bleach in the suns and rains
 On the gallow-hill of our Burgh town.

What he had done I remember not—
 Sheep-stealing, forgery, some offence
 Which rich men hate with a hate intense,
 Nought can appease, but to see the man rot.

Of course, in those days it was wrong
to kill,
Yet murder often escaped the rope ;
But for him there was not a gleam
of hope,
Who wrote your name to a cheque
or a bill.

I say this because, though I am not
aware,
After all these years, what his crime
might be,
Had he wrought a murder, it's certain we
Would have left the corbies to pick
him bare.

Yet it was not for that we cut him
down ;
But the gallow-hill stood at the end of
the Links,
And it spoilt our game at the golfing
rinks,
That ghastly thing with its grinning
frown.

And we also thought they might hang,
or shoot,
Or head the living rogues, as they
chose ;
But it was like a savage to punish those
Who were tried already, and dead
to boot.

And it was not our kindly old Scotch
law
Which hanged a man, and was done
with him :
It was only the English that left the
grim
Corpse for the kite's and the raven's
maw.

So we vowed to get the thing out of
our way ;
We were young fellows, and apt to
think

In a wildish way o'er a drop of drink,
And the gallows, at any rate, spoilt
our play.

A dismal night ! I remember well
The sullen moan of the restless sea,
And the rain that plashed on hill
and tree,
And how my heart thumped at the
midnight bell !

Ugh ! how the creature grinned and
mowed,
As if he knew what we were about,
And thought that his airy perch without
Was better perhaps than a grave and
shroud.

Now and then from the town we heard
The night-watch call, but he came
not near,
And once we paused with a thrill of fear
At two or three notes like a singing bird.

What was it ? where was it ? Hushed
with awe,
We stood for a moment with bated
breath ;
When tripping up to that loathsome
death
Two merry boys and a girl we saw.

Wild black elf-locks, and wild large
eyes,
Came, weirdlike, tripping along the hill,
Singing a merry song, until
They saw us there with a blank
surprise.

"Come hither, now, children : what
do ye,
At midnight here, by the gibbeted
dead ?
And are ye not fearful now, I said,
On the bleak bare hill of the gallows
tree ?"

"Nay," quoth the maiden straight
and tall,
"Why should we fear the peaceful
dead?"

He is our father, sirs," she said;

"He is our father," said they all.

There was a lump, sir, rose in my
throat,

And there was a something that
dimmed my sight;

But I said, "Would you be glad this
night,

If this your father again you got?"

"Mother will soon be here, they said,
She is coming to curse the Law and
the Judge,

But there is no blessing that she will
grudge

If you give us our father back instead.

"Lo! we will haste, and bid her
come,

Yea, we will haste, and drive the cart,
For she will have drunk to cheer her
heart"—

Then they hurried away and left us
dumb.

So we cut him down; and an ugly job
It was—may I ne'er do the like again,
And we waited a while, in the pelting
rain,

Under the gallows that we did rob.

But the wild elf-locks, and the wild
large eyes,

And the tripping feet, and the eerie
song,

We looked for them, and we listened
long;

Then laughed that we could have
believed their lies.

We had cut him down; but what now
to do,

When we had him down, that puzzled
us all,

For we had not thought of his burial,
And it must be done before morning
too.

We spoke of the river near at hand,
But the thing would float there by
and by;

We thought of the sea where the tide
was high,

But that would drift him again to land.

We could easily climb the Kirkyard
wall,

But the bedral slept near, wakeful,
grim,

And the crunch of a spade would
waken him,

And a glance would tell him about
it all.

Were ever men puzzled so much before
By getting the thing they were fain
to get?

An' if it had been a burden of debt
It could not have loaded our spirits
more.

We could not carry the creature home,
We could not leave it upon the hill!

Oh, but it's strange to get your will,
And wish you hadn't for days to
come!

Then up by the winding sandy road
A light cart passed by the shooting-
butts,

Jolting o'er hummocks, and creaking
in ruts,

And came to the place where we
still abode.

And with it a gipsy woman we saw,
Straight and tall, with a manlike stride,
And the three elf-children by her side,
And she came cursing the Judge and
the Law,

Till she saw the Thing that lay at
our feet,
When she fell on the earth with a
wild-beast cry,
And clasped it, and kissed it, as we
stood by
Silent, and hearing our own hearts beat.

Then they four lifted it from the ground,
And laid it there on the donkey cart ;
Who shall tell me the thoughts of that
wild heart—
For she too could love—when her
dead she found.

“I am better at banning than blessing,”
she said,
“But what of blessing my lips can
give,
May it be yours, while you breathe
and live,
For that ye have given me back my
dead.

“A rogue and a thief—what else
could he be ?
But rogue or thief, lads, he loved us
well ;
If he beat us too, as our backs can tell,
Who had a better right than he ?

“Fear not the Law shall find out what
Ye have done this night ; go home
and sleep,
Sure that your secret is buried deep ;
I have them near by who will see
to that.”

She did not weep, and she did not pray,
There was not a tremor in her tone,

Yet she left us sobbing somehow alone,
As into the dark she strode away.

That day each street had its eager
crowd ;
Who could have robbed the gallows
tree ?
And the Council met, and the Pro-
vost, he
Spoke like a minister long and loud.

Oh how he fumed like a turkey-cock !
We had done despite to the sacred law,
We had robbed the gallows of half
its awe,
We had given authority there a shock.

Nobody knew before in the town
He could have been half so eloquent ;
And he was sure he was on the scent
Of the law - defiers that “cut him
down.”

By and by they should find that he
The law and its majesty would maintain,
And hang the rogue in his chains again,
And make those rebels a sight to see.

They dredged the river, they searched
the shore,
They watched the kirkyard, night
by night,
They questioned here and there, and
quite
Lost their heads for a week and more.

Then one of us just threw out a hint,
It must have been witchcraft—and it
took
With the ministers like a baited hook,
Who preached on it without let or stint.

That Sunday, sir, we learnt far more
Of the Witch of Endor, and her arts
For the making of dead men play the
parts
Of living saints, than for years before.

But the Provost, shrewd man, muttered
Pshaw !

Let the ministers preach and catechise ;
If the devil had wanted such a prize,
What thought he do with a workman's
saw ?

But for me I heeded not what they said ;
For it rung in my head there all
day long,

That eerie snatch of a gipsy song,
And "He is our Father, living or dead."

All the father she ever knew
In earth or in heaven—that gruesome
thing !

And she had come up the hill to sing
Her song to him as she used to do !

Oh it was pitiful ! but when I thought
Of that wild night, and its madcap job,
I could not be sorry that we did rob
The gallows, and gave them what they
sought.

Better a quiet grave to fill,
Where the grass is green, and the daisies
grow,
And the white thorn scatters its fragrant
snow,
Than to mock their hearts on the
gallow hill.

And this is the saw that cut him down,
And this is the hand that cleared the
Links
Of a thing that spoilt the golfing rinks,
Now and again, in our Burgh town.

THE POETASTER

THERE was a pathos in it, friend,
Though you might smile, as I did too,
To see that pile of manuscript
So strangely from its old trunk crypt
Brought suddenly to view.

Ah ! there are things in this strange life,
Which move us unto mirth, and yet
Behind the laughter there are tears,
And thoughts which in the after years,
Bring touches of regret.

And oft it is an accident
Whether you chance to laugh or weep,
But when you call it back again,
The laughter has a twinge of pain
Which haunts you in your sleep.

He was a poor dull-plodding man,
So poor he kept not even a bird
To cheer his solitude by song,
And voice for him the silent throng
Of thoughts that find no word.

Nor dog, nor cat, nor bird had he,
Nor wife nor child had ever come
To share the burden of his lot,
Which he endured, and murmured not,
In quiet patience dumb.

And now he lay there cold and dead,
And none had watched to see him die ;
Alone he had lived all his days,
Alone he passed from human ways
Beneath the All-seeing eye.

There was a little loaf of bread—
He had not died of hunger then—
A little fuel too, and oil,
And water in a can to boil
If day should come again,

Which never came ; and when we
sought
Through press and drawers for aught
to give
Him decent burial with the dead,
As he had always held his head
'Mong them that decent live,

Nor gold nor silver there was found,
Nor plack nor penny; life had gone
Just as the little purse was spent,
Which lately had no increment
From work that he had done.

It had just lasted out his time
Through careful scrimping day by day;
He had no debt, he had no kin,
And there was nought to lose or win,
When thus he went his way.

But for the money, vainly sought,
In a moth-eaten trunk we found
A mass of manuscripts—a pile
Of papers writ in careful style,
Some loose, some rudely bound.

Strange gatherings! scraps of every
kind,
Backs of old letters, envelopes,
Half-used account books, paper bags
Picked up among the ash and rags
And refuse of the shops:

And every tattered scrap close writ
With pen or pencil, as 'twould bear,
With verses on a hundred themes,
With pious arguments and dreams,
All rhymed with patient care.

Oh no; he had no message, none,
To wise or foolish, good or bad;
No prophet's burden-word he bore,
Which he must speak; and what is
more,
He never thought he had.

A silent soul, he went about
His daily task, and every night
Back to his dingy attic came,
Nor dreamed about the coming fame
Or setting this world right.

None ever heard him hint a thought
Of fancied greatness; never line

Of his competed for a place
In corners which small poets grace;
He bottled it like wine.

But when his fellow-labourers met
With pipe and tankard at the inn,
He to his attic would retire,
And trim his lamp, and light his fire,
And pen his verses thin;

And lived unto a good old age,
And never begged a bit of bread,
And cheered his loneliness with these
Bald rhymes about the birds and trees,
And living men and dead.

There is no sacred fire in them,
Nor much of homely sense and shrewd;
Imperfect lines, imperfect rhymes,
False quantities, mistaken chimes,
Yet all the feeling good.

There is no envy of the great,
There's praise of patriot and saint;
If now the story have no point,
The reasoning now be out of joint,
There is no vain complaint.

Hard toil it was for that hard hand
To hammer out these limping lines,
Harder than handling spade or hod,
Or trenching ditch, or delving sod,
Or picking in dark mines.

Yet night by night he must have writ
His verse or two for forty years,
Long poems some, some meant for songs,
Some voiced the common people's
wrongs,
Some breathed his own sad fears.

But none had ever heard him say
How the long evening hours were spent;
He never showed the rhymes he writ,
Nor tried to see their clumsy wit
How it might look in print.

Enough for him the silent task,
 Enough to read the abortive rhyme,
 Now pleased with this, now touched
 with that,

He knew not why ; he knew not what
 Was pathos, or sublime.

Strange passion ! thus to jingle words,
 And hide them in a big old chest !
 'Twas but some hours before he died
 The last was written, and beside
 The rest in order placed.

Yet there was pathos in it, friend ;
 I laughed a little on my road,
 But the tears got the better soon,
 It was so innocent to croon
 His bits of verse to God.

PARISH PASTORS

LONG AGO

THERE were some five hundred, young
 and old,
 Souls in the parish, when all were told,
 Cock-lairds upon the landward braes,
 Scattered farmers, and cottar folk,
 And the fishers who kept to their own
 old ways
 In the village that huddled beneath
 the rock,
 Where a sheltering cove made a
 safe retreat
 For the brown lug-sails of their
 little fleet ;
 'Twas the only break in a
 stormy shore
 Rock-girdled for ten good miles,
 and more.

Five hundred souls, and they did
 not care
 Though neither a Bank nor a Post
 was there,

Nor Doctor to physic their mortal ills,
 Nor Lawyer to draw their deeds
 and wills—

Ten miles off was a town where these
 Might be had by them when they please ;
 And farmers, going to market, brought
 What letters arrived there, now and then,
 Which maybe had lain for a month,
 unsought,

Spotted with flies in the window pane.
 Easily went the world with them,
 They made no struggle its tide to stem,
 But slumbered as in a quiet bay,
 And heard its murmuring far away,
 And grew their oats, and ground their
 bere,
 And caught the fish, and fed the steer,
 And noted the changes of the year.

But for the care of their souls they had
 Of pious and learned pastors three ;
 Not that the way of their life was bad,
 Or that more godly they sought to be
 Than their neighbour-folk by the wild
 North Sea ;

But just that it had been so of old,
 And they never thought to enlarge
 the fold,

And gather the flock together there
 With ampler room and a freer air.
 So had their fathers done, and they
 Followed of course in their fathers' way.
 And the pastors three with their
 scanty flocks

Of cock-lairds, farmers, and fisher folks,
 Peacefully lived, as brethren should,
 All of them busy in doing good,
 Christening, wedding, and burying,
 each

After the manner his Church did teach,
 And trying on Sundays truth to preach.

DR. BOYACK

Low on a haugh, by the river side,
 The homely Manse in its garden stood,

With a clump of grand old elms to hide
The rough-cast walls, and the
 painless wood.

And close to it was the parish kirk,
But what it was there was nought to tell,
Save only a belfry and tinkling bell,
Above its rough-cast rubble-work.

A humble Kirk, and a homely Manse
On the haugh among the trees
 and rooks;

Where the white-thorn hedges had
 grown, perchance,
Unpruned for the sake of the ricks
 and stooks,

For the stooks of corn and hay
 are more

Than a well-trimmed hedge to a
 household poor:

But they helped to make more
 wildly fair

The old Manse-garden, breathing there
Of thyme and every sweet herb
 that grows,

And the pink and wall-flower, and
 cabbage rose.

Oh, there the strawberry beds were
 good,

And the gooseberry bushes had
 golden fruit,

And the apple-tree boughs were
 stayed with wood,

They clustered so thick upon every
 shoot,

And the jargonelles on the gable hung
Sweet as honey the leaves among:

Just a garden for boys and girls,

Ne'er while they lived to be forgot;

And sunny faces and golden curls

Flashed through its trees when the sun
 was hot—

Eight wild boys, and as many maids,

In homespun dresses, with unkempt
 hair,

Laughed and sang in the grassy
 glades,

Or gathered the fruits of the garden fair,

And gladdened the minister's heart,
 but yet

They burdened it too with a fear
 of debt.

Easy-natured and kindly he,
Respectable always in everything;
Nothing he did but it had the ring
Of cultured mediocrity;

In talents, in morals, in learned lore
Respectable ever, and nothing more.
No special mission had he to preach;
No special faculty his to teach;
Nor special power of the priestly art
Or to console, or move the heart;
There seemed no reason why he
 should be

God's servant there in the parish Kirk,
Instead of dealing out tape or tea,
Or driving the plough from morn
 to mirk,

Save that he read some Latin or Greek,
And wrote good words that were
 smooth and weak.

Yet he did his task in a patient way,
With doctrine solid, if stiff and cold,
Ready, by day or by night, to pray
With the sick or the poor that were
 in his fold—

Mostly the farmers and cottar-folk,
To all of whom, as they hung about
After sermon, the minister spoke
Of the weather and crops, and the
 sheep and *nowt*,

And their rheumatisms, and their
 girls and boys,

And all their commonplace griefs
 and joys.

No high ideal had he to raise
Their souls from the level of
 common ways,

Nor passion nor power to stir the mind
As with the rush of a heaven-
 born wind:

But well he knew all their homely lot,
Their joys and sorrows he ne'er forgot,

Could tell what came of the scholar
son,
And where had the married daughter
gone,
Had ever the fitting word on his lip,
And gripped each hand with the
proper grip :
That bound their hearts to him fast
and true
As surest cords of love could do.
Little he read, and what he did
Was mostly sermons to "fang his
pump,"
When it ran dry, and the weekly need
Rang in his head like a warning trump.
Yet though he made complaint
that wealth
Of letters, alas, was not for him,
Being rich in children in hungry
health,
I trow he was not a man to dim
His eyes with poring on musty books ;
Far better he liked the cawing rooks,
The smell of the hay-field, and
the talk
Of farming folk in a sauntering walk ;
For what of learning he had was worn
Outside, like clothes of the proper trim,
But it never was truly part of him,
And now it was somewhat rent
and torn.
He had not a doubt to trouble him,
And his faiths were only as corks
to swim
Through life as easily as he might,
And net whatever might come his
way ;
And with the world he would not
fight,
If he could only get through the day.
Yet he was reasonable, and shed
A sort of light too along his path,
Which not from the heavenly founts
was fed,
Nor yet from the baleful fires of
wrath :

It was somewhat earthly perhaps and
cold,
And led not many into the fold,
But yet it did not lead astray,
If it only lit up half the way.
No lofty purpose in life had he,
No spirit earnest and brave and true
The glory and hope of God to see ;
Nor yet a-craving for something new :
But he walked with them in the way
they trod,
And talked with them of the things
they knew,
And his speech was easy and natural
too,
Save when he spoke of the things
of God.
A wholesome nature, and fain to please ;
Saintship in him had been like disease
Which he was ever upon the watch—
Though he hardly needed it—not to
catch ;
For to be called Fanatic he
Dreaded like sin and misery.

DEAN DUFFUS

Down in the cove, where the fisher folk
Huddled beneath the lighthouse rock,
There was a dainty little Kirk
Of the old faithful mason-work,—
It might have been choir, or pillared
nave,
Wreck of a church, by the break-
ing wave,
And a great cross on the gable stood ;
And all within it was fair and good,—
Marble altar, and carven font,
And silver vessels, as were wont,
Under the great black holy Rood.

Long it had been but a ruin grey,
Roofless, and wasting in slow decay,
The mullions all from the windows gone ;
The carven niche, and the fine-
scrolled stone

By nettles and long grass hid from view;
 And the font had been broken and
 overthrown,
 And pillar and arch were crumbling
 too;

And the cunning fox had made his lair,
 And the rook and the jay had nestled
 there.

Some laid the blame upon Knox's
 wrath;

Some held it was swept from the
 Covenant's path;

Some charged it to Cromwell's
 Ironclads;

And some to a raid of the High-
 land lads.

But they who had searched the
 matter well

Read how a great Lord lost a bet,
 And tore off the roof, and melted
 the bell,

And sold them to pay his gambling debt,
 After the new Kirk was built away
 Landward, far from the little bay.

And all agreed that a Kirk was there
 From the days that the Culdee
 launched his boat,

And came with the voice of psalm
 and prayer,

And gospel true to the people brought
 From the lone Isle of saints that lay
 Where ghostly mists on the waters slept,
 But God shone out of the mists by day,
 And spake in dreams to them when
 they slept,

And ever their souls in quiet kept.

So the good Dean, when he came there,
 Curate or priest, long years ago,
 Loving a Kirk that was old and fair
 As the ivy loves round its walls to grow,
 Had clung to it with a longing heart,
 And with his own hands cleared a part,
 Casting out nettles and grass and earth,
 Till he came to the pavement of solid
 stone;

And whatever of beauty he found,
 or worth,

He sought out its place, and fitted it on.

Then with his savings, year by year,
 He mended a bit, and roofed it in,

Living himself on sorriest cheer

This trophy again for his Church
 to win:

And now it stood there fair to see
 In lines of graceful symmetry;

A bell once more from the belfry rung,

And matin and vesper were daily sung,

And the organ pealed, and the common
 prayer

Was sweetly toned to the fishers there.

Yet all the wealth of his worldly gear

Was less than three-score pounds
 a year.

Near by the Kirk was a cottage small,
 With a red-tiled roof, and a white-
 washed wall,

A garden plot that was bright with
 flowers,

An old sun-dial to tell the hours,
 Some carven stones that were broken
 quite,

And might not fit in their places right,
 Yet were too sacred to be thrown

Among the rubbish of common stone,
 With a green wood-paling to fence
 all round,—

These told where the Dean a home
 had found.

It was not other than all the rest
 Of the fishermen's huts that there
 were seen,

Save only that it was neat and clean,
 With an attic chamber for a guest:

But the Dean's own bed was in
 the wall,

Hid behind volumes, great and tall,
 In the little room where he read
 and wrote,

And did the work that a pastor
 ought.

There on the shelves were folios piled ;
 There Benedictine fathers smiled
 In snowy vellum, crimson-lettered—
 These, he said, were his golden mines—
 And high on the upper shelves were
 scattered

Big quartos too of the great divines,
 And tables and chairs and floor were
 littered—

With books that were scored with
 scarlet lines ;

For he was a classic ripe and good,
 And loved the old wine in the
 seasoned wood,

But all translations were bottled
 and dead,

With an evil taste of the cork, he said.

The other room was a kitchen clean,
 And there no woman was ever seen,
 But once a day, about noon, his man
 Lit up the fire for a little can—

If it were not a fast, and a fast, at least,
 Came twice a week to this humble
 priest—

And made for him pulse or porridge
 sweet,

But the Church's Feasts had sodden
 meat ;

And if a guest by chance was there,
 There might be a glass of mildest ale ;
 And an evening pipe to soothe his care
 Was the one luxury did not fail.

Yet was he healthy and strong, nor kept
 Ever his bed for a day, or slept
 After the dawn, but rose to pray
 For his fisher lads in the stormy bay.

A tall, lean form with lank grey hair,
 Bushy his eyebrows, and grey his eyes,
 Deep sunk in a face that was pale
 and spare ;

And he dressed in a threadbare lowly
 guise.

One apron had served him all his days,
 His newest hat, it was ten years old,

His well-brushed coat had a shining
 glaze,

And his great thick shoes had been
 patched and soled ;

White was his lawn on the Sabbath
 morn,

But half was darning, and all was worn
 Into so fine a filament

It scarce could be handled without
 a rent.

Yet had he ever so stately an air
 That rich and poor did understand,

Whatsoever his raiment were,
 He was a man to hold command,

And none might slight him in all
 the land.

Old was the world in which he lived,
 Old the evils at which he grieved,

Old were the things that most he
 cherished,

Old were his hopes too, past and
 perished.

He held that it was a sin to own
 Other than Stuart to sit on the throne,

And still did his faith intact remain
 Now that there was not a Stuart

to reign.

Therefore a strict non-juror he
 All the years of his youth had been,

Doing his constant ministry
 In hidden ways, and in spots unseen,

Praying for him who in exile lay
 "Over the hills and far away."

Now law and order he kept, 'tis true,
 Giving to Cæsar Cæsar's due,

But the loyal heart that would have
 shed

Its blood for the kings of the
 ancient line,

Clung to the memories of the dead,
 And the vanished rule of the Right
 divine.

He fasted still for the martyred Charles,
 And him who perished on Magus
 moor,

And held that the Parliament men
were carles,

The devil pricked on to delude
the poor,

And that gallant Dundee did right
to maul

The Westland Whigs who were
rebels all.

But for the new world, and its ways,
And all the great hopes of the
latter days,

Their science and its expanding views,
New-fangled craving for latest news,
And workmen striking for higher wage,
And all that mostly our thoughts
engage—

For them he kept strictly a yearly Fast,
Each year bitterer than the last—

It fell when Culloden day begins—
And he called it the Fast of All
the Sins.

So, true to his own ideal, there
He chaunted the psalm, and read
the prayer,

And gathered the lore of ancient times
From Latin Fathers and Latin rhymes,
Till scholars came from far and near
This primitive Pastor to revere ;
But hardly ever a point was found
Where he touched the life that went
on around,

Moved it, or felt with it as it spoke,
Or heeded how its passions woke,
Or how its bubbles swelled and broke.

THE REVEREND RICHARD RULE

Landward upon the rolling braes,
Wind-swept, and apart from the
common ways,

Where once had stretched a moor-
land waste,

But now it was covered with grass
and corn,

Another kirk on a height was placed
Among two or three pine trees
tempest-torn ;

And Church of the Wilderness it
was named,

Built for a prophet-pastor, famed
For his doom-speaking words, and his
stedfast faith,

When the wild dragoons were deal-
ing death ;

But he lived through the evil times,
and saw,

Though he would not allow, a
better law ;

And the bonnet-lairds on the rolling
braes

Had been Cameron's men in the
troubulous days.

A plain square building, never meant
To be tricked with carnal ornament,
Rough in its stonework, and rude in
its lines,

Grimly it stood by the ragged pines.

There ministered one who held his head
High as the Dean, and would not brook
King or Parliament, living or dead,
Unless the Covenant oath they took :
William or George, Charles or James,
Stuart or Guelph, it mattered not,
Nor what their characters, what their
aims,

Or whence their claim to have rule
was brought ;

Whether from Bishop's anointing oil,
Or from the people who sweat and toil,
Or from a long ancestral line

Lapt in the dream of a right divine ;
He would protest against the throne,
Unless the Covenant it would own,
For this was a Covenant Land, and
bound

By solemn league to be holy ground,
Where Papist, Prelatist, Sectaries all
Should ne'er have authority, great or
small,

Nor should Erastian preach the Word
Where the martyred saints of old were
heard.

He was a small, brisk, cheerful soul,
Not a whit gloomy or morose,
Apt at telling a story droll,
Gay among brethren and jocose,
And hardly would he restrain his wit
When in grave Presbytery even they
sit.

Yet in the pulpit he would groan
About the defections which he saw,
And that he would soon be left alone
Even as Elijah to stand by the Law,
And by the altar and truth of God,
For which our Fathers dyed the sod
Red with their own best blood, that we
Might have the gospel pure and free.
Then would his tremulous voice swell
higher,
Like the sound of winds among trees
that moan,
As though some Power did his soul
inspire,
Nor even the Dean could so finely
intone.

He, too, was a man of learning, skilled
In all polemics since Luther broke
Her sleep, and the Church from
dreams awoke,
And wrath was kindled, and blood
was spilled.

Well had he conned each mighty tome
Of Calvinist, Lutheran, Doctor of
Rome,

And what the Philistine-Prelate writ,
And how the Puritan-David hit
The boastful giant with sling and stone,
And struck down the mitre that
wrecked the throne.

The faintest shade of Arminian error
Well could his watchful eye detect,
And he thundered at it, in wrath and
terror,

For comfort there of the Lord's Elect.

So he deemed he must faithful be
Unto the little flock that he
Tended and fed amid sore distress
In the lonely Church of the Wilderness.

Stronger he than the other two,
Learning and talent he did not lack ;
Yet were there some things he could do
From which their souls would have
shrunk back.

He was not so noble, I reckon, as they,
At least, he could stoop to a meaner
way,

And did not feel it, but made a jest
Of what would have broken their
soundest rest.

For the wee cock-lairds that were his
flock,

They were as hard as the flinty rock ;
And minded to have their gospel cheap,
Letting him sow if themselves might
reap ;

And, maybe, dealing with them had
been

The blunting of feelings that once were
keen ;

And maybe the children's hungry cry
Quenched the gleam of his watchful eye.

Five hundred souls, when all were told,
Dwelt in the parish, young and old,
Well shepherded surely by pastors three
Who lived together in amity,

And had no quarrels, nor sought to rob
Each other's folds of a sheep or lamb,
And lived, far off from the noisy mob,
In a world of their own that was full
of calm.

Yet what could they do for the land-
ward folk,

Or the fishers beneath the lighthouse
rock ?

What help to their welfare could they
bring ?

What light to shine on the darkening
road ?

What song could they give their hearts
to sing

When burdened with sorrow or death
or—God?

What gospel had they to raise the soul
Above the weather and crops and beeves,
And spur them to run for the grander
goal

In the world beyond these falling leaves?

Respectable one, and easy-hearted,
He went about in a kindly way;
One lived in a world that had long
departed;

And one was eager the slain to slay.
Meanwhile the people grew their oats,
And mended lines and nets and boats,
And made their malt, and brewed
their ale,

And drank at wedding-feast and fair,
And harvest-home, and auction-sale;
And at the funerals took their share
Of heavy wines and waters strong,
As they bore the dismal bier along.
But there were mothers that were not
wives,

And there were widows soon tired of
weeping,

And there were prodigals wasting lives,
And sorrowful hearts that lay unsleeping,
Through weary nights long vigil
keeping.

And they had their thoughts about life
and death,

And sin and mercy and God and faith;
And, now and then, from the world
without

There came to their souls strange
wafts of doubt,

And things that were not in the
catechism;

But how to deal with them no one knew.
They dreaded heresy, error and schism,
But wist not what of these thoughts
were true,

Or what, if they were, they ought to do:

For the three good pastors kept their
road,

And lightened not any one of his load.

Now, times are changed; there are
not many more

Souls in the parish than were of yore,
Yet the pastors three have grown to
four;

And their thoughts are run in a
sharper mould,

And a spirit is there which was not
of old.

It may be, their faith in God is more,
But they have not the same faith in
each other;

It may be, they love Christ as before,
But they walk not so lovingly now
together.

And yet a milder gospel tells
Of love that in the Father dwells,
And sweeter strains of praise are sung,
And bells in graceful spires are rung,
And they all walk in stricter ways,
And they all spend laborious days.
For life is there, and that is good,
Though it be young life in its selfish
mood—

Life is there, with its warmth and
power,

Its yearning hope, and its eager strife,
Its thought unfolding like a flower,
Its craving still for a fuller life,
Its futile effort, its failing faith,
Its fresh revival and confidence,
Its error too, like a misty wraith,
Ghost of some old forgotten sense—

Life with its loves, and hates, and
fears,

Its wondrous joys, and its bitter tears,
Its follies, blunders, useless fights,
Its brooding shadows, and mystic
lights:

Life has broken the slumberous spell,
And it is not all good,—yet it is all
well.

AMORY HILL

I

Does any one know about Amory Hill?
 What an unrestful mind she had,
 Questioning everything, good and bad,
 Subtle in thought, and firm of will!
 Beautiful, too, in her way: but what
 Ever could come of a girl like that?

Oh, you remember the large grey eyes;
 What a keen look in them did lie,
 Fain to be told the reason why
 We ever held anything true or wise!
 And say what you might, she would
 still find out,
 Somehow or other, a ground for doubt.

Under the Word she must see the
 Thing,
 Never content with the neatest phrase;
 The coin might be of the ancient days,
 But still she must try if it truly ring,
 And bite it too with her dainty teeth,
 For it might look well, and be false
 beneath.

No matter how old a lie might be,
 Age, she said, could not make it true;
 No matter though truth be fresh and
 new,
 It was the pleasanter sight to see,
 Like a fresh star your eyes behold
 Where never a star had been seen of old.

Liked! how could she be liked, a girl
 Who'd squat her down in a quiet nook
 Out of the way, with a folio book,
 While all the rest of us were in a whirl
 Of work or talk? And she did not
 heed,
 If only we left her at peace to read.

Of course, her doubts and her questions
 tried
 Every one's patience, more or less,

And the older folk, when they felt
 the stress,
 Were fain their ignorance to hide,
 And sent her off, with a sharp rebuke,
 Back again to her folio book.

Somehow she never took it ill,
 Whatsoever you chanced to say;
 But not in the least did it change her
 way;
 She soon had another question still:
 Never the same one twice, for now
 She would puzzle it out by herself
 somehow.

What could come of a girl like that,
 Who would not walk on the common
 road,
 Who fretted at bearing the common
 load,
 And did not know what she would be at,
 And was not sure of the common creed,
 And gave not her dress a moment's
 heed?

O Amory Hill! Amory Hill!
 And yet how good she was and nice,
 Scorning a meanness, and hating a vice,
 With a brave true heart and a patient
 will,
 Loving the truth, and not afraid!—
 What has come of the grey-eyed maid?

II

I thought you had heard of Amory
 Hill:
 It made at the time a mighty stir,
 But nobody now-a-days thinks of her.
 We wonder at nothing, good or ill,
 After two or three days are past—
 That is enough for a comet to last.

Amory grew, as you might expect,
 From a doubting, questioning, restless
 elf

To a woman who brooded by herself
About the Church, and the Lord's
Elect,
About the fate of the quick and dead,
Doubting the more, the more she read.

At a Revival some one got
A hold of her for a little while ;
And she sang their hymns with an
angel's smile,
And tried to live on their shallow
thought ;
But back the questions came, and then
Oh, she was deep in her doubts again.

She writ a Book that I tried to read,
But could not tell what it was about—
Just like thoughts that she had thrown
out
Into the darkness of thought and deed,
And heard them in the silence roll
Back again on her yearning soul.

Poor girl! she wandered, here and
there,
From pastures green where the grace
was rife,
Seeking the Way and the Truth and
the Life,
And finding but shadows and dim
despair,
Till she came to the perilous brink of
Faith,
Beyond which lieth the realm of death.

Star after star had all gone out,
Darkest night was on all her sky ;
And moaning as one who is ready to
die,
Ah me ! she said, Must I live without
God and His Christ and the hope
divine,
That erewhile gladdened this life of
mine ?

Then one laid hold of her, drew her
back
From the dismal gloom of that deadly
brink,
Told her that now she must cease
to think,
And then no wisdom her soul should
lack ;
If to the Church she would only bow,
It would do all of her thinking now.

Bland his speech was, and mild his look ;
Was he an angel come from heaven
To save the soul that was tempest-
driven
There where in terror and pain it shook ?
And what had all of her thinking
brought,
Except despair of all certain thought ?

So straightway into his arms she fell,
Cast away Reason, and swallowed the
Creeds,
Mumbled her aves, and counted her
beads,
And said it was good in peace to dwell
With Nuns who had not a thought in
their head—
But is it the peace of the living or dead ?

She does much good to the sick and
poor,
Going about in that quaint odd dress
With the little book which her fingers
press :
But then she did quite as much good
before,
For Amory Hill was always sweet,
And came like a sunbeam along the
street.

III

Who would know me for Amory Hill,
Once the plague and the tease of School,
Querying lesson, and breaking rule ?
And yet I fear I am Amory still,

Under the white cap and the hood
Of the patient, merciful Sisterhood.

I've tried, till I think there is no use
trying

To be anything other than I was made ;
I've sought the light, and I've sought
the shade,

I've crushed my thought, when it rose
defying,

I've nursed submission, and fondled
pain,

Yet ever the thoughts come back again.

Weary, I'm weary ; what shall I do ?

Oh, will that chatter of theirs not cease ?

Here I had hoped to have quiet peace

In the daily round of duties true,

And the tranquil hymn, and the whis-
pered prayer,

Freed from the burden of trouble
and care.

Once I wrestled, in earnest thought,
With weighty problems of truth
and faith,

With the high issues of life and death,

And what we should not do, what
we ought :

But here our wrestle is not to think—

Can it be more sinful to see than wink ?

Does God, indeed, mean that we
should not bear

The burden of thought ? or fashion
a life

Of peace, instead of the noble strife

Inspiring ever the soul to dare,

And make fresh conquests, if it may,

On the realm of darkness, day by day ?

Oh, but this is rebellion, this is sin :

So they tell me, and I have tried

To crush it out, and have done, beside,

Many a penance for letting it in.

But is it sinful ? and can it be right

To close the shutters, when God

is Light ?

This is the hour when they sit and talk,
Oh such nothings ! and not without

Touches of malice too, all about

What they saw in the daily walk

To visit the sick and the poor,

when they

Looked on the world and its

wicked way.

But why is the world more wicked
than they ?

They were silly girls ere they took
the vow,

And they're just as silly sisters now.

Ribbons and gawds may be put away,

And love and marriage be counted

shame,

Yet heart and mind may be still

the same.

How should they differ from what
they were ?—

Hear ! how they chatter as school-
girls do,

And gossip about the folk they knew,

And who was married, and who

was there :—

I blame them not, if they did not blame

The world as wicked for doing

the same.

Are all the people who try to do good

As little-minded as those I've known ?

Ere I came here, how I used to groan

At Dorcas meetings in angry mood !

And the District Visitors need,

I'm sure,

Quite as much visiting as the poor.

Oh, how I shrank from the vulgar talk,

The fuss, and the hard mechanical way

Of saving so many souls a day

By dropping tracts in a morning walk !

Not so, I said, would the work

be done

Here by the consecrated Nun.

But here or there, it is all the same,
 The talk alike, and the fuss and fret,
 And the vulgar methods of clearing debt,
 And the mechanical ways and lame
 For doing of spiritual work, without
 The faintest thought what you
 are about.

And then this drilling of hands
 and lips!
 So many hours of work a day,
 So many hours to praise and pray,
 All of our time cut into snips,
 And just as you get your mind
 in swing,
 There goes the bell with its ting,
 ting, ting!

Was I mistaken in coming here?
 Was it a hasty step I made?
 I am still free to go back, 'tis said;
 And I was not meant for a Nun, I fear.
 But they are all pleased with their
 happy lot,
 And what would they think if they
 knew my thought?

It's nonsense what people were wont
 to say
 About the misery vows may bring,
 About the hearts that are suffering,
 And the glad bright youth as it
 wastes away;
 There is nothing to waste, for they
 have no mind,
 Nor heart, nor passion of any kind.

And yet I feel that I am not free.
 Oh, the subtle threads that are wound
 About us here till our souls are bound,
 And there's nothing for it but just to be
 As silly as all the rest, and make
 A merit of it for Jesus' sake.

I gave up my former life in dread
 Of the rush of thoughts to my
 eager soul,
 Terrible as the waves that roll
 Over the weary swimmer's head;
 But now if I leave this, it will be
 In scorn of its dull vacuity.

Ay, if I leave it! but dare I go?
 Do I not know what would be said
 Better it were to be lying dead
 Than pine away with a poison slow
 Of lies that would tingle in every vein,
 And break the heart with a name-
 less pain?

Ah! rebel nature could not endure
 The vacant mind and the weary day,
 The effort to keep all thought away,
 But for the work 'mong the sick
 and poor:
 It is among them that I find my
 good,—
 If they would not pain me by gratitude.

MISS BELLA JAPP

TO HER YOUNG MINISTER

SPEAK out, speak out!
 We are all hungering, sir, for truth-
 ful words
 Of faith or doubt;
 And we are weary of all mocking-birds
 Who would be dumb
 If they might eat their meat, and do
 no more;
 And only come,
 And sing again what we have heard
 before,
 And grind again the same tune at
 the door
 To get their crumb.

Oh yes, yes, yes!

We have much talk, we have
abundant speech

In Rhetoric dress—

Thin thready talk that has no truth
to teach;

Poor echoes sent

From rock-like brains that barren are
of thought:

No nutriment

On which a soul may live is to be got
From echoes which are shadows, and
give not

The least content.

Just speak out that

Which God gives you to live on
day by day;

And say not what

The people round about would have
you say—

Oh I could preach,

If they would let me, if I had
a sphere!—

If you would reach

The hearts of others, listen first
and hear

What your own heart is saying, and
speak it clear

To all and each.

Take not your words

From pulpit, platform, or from
parliament;

Just take the Lord's—

The words which from His lips to you
are sent,

Which few desire,

But all believe, whether they will
or no:

And for no hire

Proclaim them from the housetops
where you go,

And cry aloud, because they burn
and glow

In you like fire!

What! man, you talk

Of living by the gospel you proclaim!

Well, if you walk

So as to glorify the Lord's great name,

You shall have meat

Enough—the meat He gave to His
own Son,

And that was sweet.

“Not muzzle the ox!” what harm
that text has done,

Just making lazy *nowt* of many a one
For meat to eat!

I've gone to Kirk

Sixty years now since first with
Jenny, nurse;

And what a work

I've heard them make about the Fall
and Curse,

Imputed sin,

Imputed right, imputed everything.

Meanwhile within

The devil who had us in his grips
would sing,

“Impute away! that's just the way
to bring

My bairns in.”

Now don't you spin

Notions and crotchet-things, like that
about

Imputed sin,

When sin's a fact whereof there is
no doubt;

As you can see

Flaunting at every corner its disgrace
Or misery,

And in the “Publics” running a
hot race,

Ay! and at Kirk too smirking in
the face

O' the Pharisee.

Then speak out, man;

Out with it plain, the devil is in
the town,

And what we can,
That, with God's help, we must, to
put him down :

Oh, fools may scoff,
But he laughs last who truth has on
his side :

Hell's not far off
Where such folk are ; it's at your
very side,
And souls drop in, as balls are made
to slide

I' th' holes at golf.

There are the holes,
And here the devil's game, and well
he plays ;

For thoughtless souls
Come dropping in, with some bit
pleasant phrase,

Each hour o' the day.
An easy job he's had this many a year,
For it's poor play

We've had against him ; God's been
ill served here,
And it's been like to drive me mad
to hear

Their feckless way.

But you have come
Fresh and hot-hearted, as I hear,
from College,
Freighted like some
Others, no doubt, with tons of useless
knowledge.

But, O my man,
It's not your metaphysics that we need,
Watery and wan ;

Just take the Book, and with your
own eyes read,
And drop the spectacles of an old-
world creed

About "The Plan."

And preach right out,
And pray ; I do not mean to stamp
the floor,

And sweat and shout ;
God is not deaf that you should need
to roar :

But take our sin
Right by the throat, and call it by
its name,

Nor mind the din
The devil will raise because ye spoil
his game,
Or Pharisee because he's put to shame,
Turned outside in.

Pick ye no words
To tickle itching ears with rhetoric ;
They have the birds
To sing to them, if that is what
they seek :

It's dainty phrase
And mincing speech have been our
very death

These many days,
As in the Kirk we sought not truth
and faith,
But tricks of art to hear with bated
breath,

Like fine stage plays.

Be strong and true ;
Hold up our sins that we may see
them bare,

And hold up too
The Cross both to believe it, and
to share

Its pain and loss,
Should sorrow fill our cup unto
the brim ;

For on the Cross
We see the glory as the eye grows dim,
Only we're fain to hand it on to Him
Who clasped it close.

Believing much
The Cross, that it is all our help
and hope,

We will not touch
It with our finger, fain to let it drop ;

And therewith cease
 The grace and bliss and riches that
 it brings,
 And all increase;
 Meanwhile we sing about the angels'
 wings,
 And soothe the sickly conscience as
 it stings,
 And call this Peace.

THE VILLAGE PHILOSOPHER

HE kept the village school—some score
 Of boys and girls, with little primers;
 Their fathers he had taught before,
 Had called their mothers "idle
 limmers":

For well he liked to give hard names,
 But still in blindest accent spoken;
 They never spoilt the children's games,
 Nor yet by them their heads were
 broken.

He had been village "merchant" once,
 But had not prospered in that calling;
 A trade, he said, for any dunce,
 To be a ledger overhauling:
 A silly, mindless business, he
 Was heard in very scorn to mutter,
 To barter cloth and combs and tea
 And spades and rakes for eggs and
 butter!

For he was a philosopher,
 And such with trade make no alliance;
 They said that even the minister
 Was puzzled with his views of science:
 He knew the hour of the Eclipse,
 He made the Kirk a ventilator,
 And could have sailed the biggest ships
 Across the line of the Equator.

Before the school door he had reared
 A pillar-stone and true sun-dial;

And in the window there appeared,
 For weather-glass, a wondrous phial,
 Its neck was partly ground, and then
 'Twas hung, mouth-downward, filled
 with water;
 And if it dropped, there would be rain,
 But if it shrank, the clouds would
 scatter.

He had a glass that showed the moon
 Whose mountains looked like inky
 blotches,

He had a box that played a tune,
 When rightly touched at certain
 notches;

He had a round electric wheel
 Could give a shock to all the village,
 That made their elbows ache, and
 feel

As tired as with a hard day's tillage.

He beat the smith—until he drank—
 At working cures on sickly cattle;
 For when he came to byre or fank,
 The sight of him was half the battle:
 In very fear the ewes grew well
 The moment that they smelt his potions,
 And cows to healthy sweating fell
 To see his poultices and lotions.

So blandly as he pinched his snuff
 When he did horse or bullock handle!
 So careful as he mixed the stuff
 By light of flaring lamp or candle!
 So wisely as he would discourse
 Of Pleuro, Foot - and - Mouth, or
 Staggers!

And if the stubborn brutes grew worse,
 He glared at them with looks like
 daggers.

Oh little village-world, that hast
 Thy prophets, watched with faith and
 wonder,

Stoutly believed in to the last
 In spite of failure, loss and blunder,

What art thou but the world in small?
And what its prophets more than
thine are?

Perhaps an inch or two more tall,
But hardly even a shade diviner.

ALTNACRAIG

THE HIGHLAND HOME OF PROFESSOR
BLACKIE

Fair within and without,
Meet home for a sage and poet,
With the pine-clad red crags all about,
And the islanded sea below it;
Behind, is a ridgy hill,
And a burn leaps down the brae,
Where the sleepy clack of a little mill
Low-pulses through the day.

Fair without, but within
Is a rarer nobler beauty—
Womanly grace the heart to win,
And patient doing of duty;
And manly thinking and wise,
And lore of the ancient times,
And a free true soul that hath no
disguise,
Still singing its careless rhymes.

Without and within, all fair—
The form alike and the spirit—
He blithe and gay as the bird of
the air,

She calm in her modest merit;
A self-assertive Greek,
Brisk to reason or jest,
Espoused to a Roman matron meek
And patient and self-suppressed.

Green Kerrera lies below,
You can see the green tower of Dunolly,
Lismore is green where the white
ships go
Sailing by Appin slowly.

There are clouds on the hills of Mull,
And the mist over Morven streams;
And the heart of the Celt, like his
day, is dull,
Or its lights but the fitfullest gleams.

O hills of Appin and Lorn,
And green foamed-girdled islands,
And pools where the rushing streams
are born

That sing to the lonely Highlands;
Dear to this friend of the Gael
Are loch and stream and Ben,
And the eerie legend and song and
tale
That haunt the brackened glen.

Elf-like his locks and grey,
That wave o'er a Greek-like beauty—
Tokens of wisdom ripe, whose day
Was spent in Love and Duty;
But the spirit is gay and young
As in its dewy morn,
And ever the bird-like song is sung
As the fresh new thought is born;

Bird-like song, from the hour
That fresh as the sun he rises,
Song in the mist and the flying shower,
Song when the light surprises,
Song on the lonely road,
Song in the thronging street;
Ever singing his thoughts to God,
For his thoughts are pure and sweet.

And whether of Clachan he speaks
Crumbling in dell of the Forest,
Or the rich full life of the grand old
Greeks,
Or Him whom thou surely adorest,
The torrent of speech high-wrought,
Perchance with some froth on it,
Is ever a power too of generous
thought,
With flashes of sparkling wit.

Now fatefullest tales are told
 From Æschylus' tragic pages;
 Now Plato and Goethe converse
 hold

Across the years and the ages;
 Or Duncan Ban and the deer
 Sweep down the rocky dell,
 And burning pleas from his lips you
 hear
 For the Celt he loves so well.

O haunt of the good and wise,
 How oft have thy walls resounded
 With eloquent pleas for the Celt that
 lies,
 By a sordid life surrounded,
 Or with grief that his soul's true
 health
 Should yield to the bigot's spell,
 Or the meaner sway of vulgar wealth
 That lords the hill and the dell!

Beautiful home of truth!
 Shall we taste no more thy gladness,
 Thy mirth with the innocent bloom
 of youth,
 Thy wise and thoughtful sadness?
 Shall we sit no more at thy board
 As in the bright old times
 With the lightsome jest, and the
 grave good word,
 And jets of dainty rhymes?

Farewell! the sea will beat
 On thy brown rocks, crisply foaming,
 And friends will sit on the far-viewed
 seat,
 And talk in the golden gloaming;
 But not such talk as we
 Under the red pines had,
 And, I think, I shall never more
 care to see
 The place where I was so glad.

COBAIRDY

AN old Scotch house, only one room
 wide,
 But four storeys high, with "a turn-
 pike stair"
 That corkscrewed up a round tower
 on its side,
 With the outhouses made three parts
 of a square;
 A quaint coat-of-arms o'er the big-
 nailed door
 Had roughly been carved on the red
 sand stone,
 And the gate to the square, which
 the same arms bore,
 Was arched overhead with a whale's
 jawbone.

The laird was a squat little hard-
 featured man,
 Something deaf in the hearing, and
 bowed in the legs,
 Careful to waste nought, and get all
 he can
 For his oats and his bere, and his
 butter and eggs;
 His mother lived still in the kitchen
 there,
 For the parlour was draughty, the
 dining-room grim,
 With no sort of comfort, the laird
 would declare,
 From portraits of old lairds that
 glowered down at him.

For some of them had red coats, and
 whips in their hand,
 Some, gay powdered heads and lace-
 ruffles fine,
 And the red coats and ruffles meant
 acres of land,
 The laird could not think of, and
 cheerfully dine;

Yet the "Madams" were worse,
 with their head-tires and frills
 And satins, every yard of which had
 cost him dear;
 For the clothing of their backs they
 had stript half his hills,
 And they were not like his mother
 for all their fine gear.

Rarely in the parlour, then, Cobairdy
 would sit,
 And never in the dining-room, for
 that made him glum
 To think how his forebears, men of
 little wit,
 Had parted with his acres for all
 time to come;
 Racing and dressing and rattling at
 the dice,
 To rob him of half his bonnygreen hills,
 Drinking and card-playing, and
 dabbling in vice,
 Till there was little left him but
 wadsets and bills.

Each night by the big kitchen fire
 he was seen,
 Where an oil-cruse and rushwick
 bleared through the reek,
 He and his mother, with a draught-
 board between,
 Playing a long game would last near
 a week:
 'Twas a saving of fire, and a saving of
 light,
 And twice as much comfort, and half
 as much care;
 And as for the game, if he lost in a
 night
 A penny to his mother, it was neither
 here nor there.

And day after day, with the sickle or
 the flail,
 Or the harrow or the plough he
 would toil, and not tire;

And night after night, his mother
 would not fail
 To set forth the draught-board beside
 the peat-fire;
 Only on the Sundays, when they
 came from the Kirk,
 And saw to the kye, and their fodder
 and their drink,
 For the draughts they had "Boston"
 to read in the mirk,
 And maybe o'er his pages would get
 just a wink.

Few were their words as they sat
 there alone,
 With the "lass" at her wheel, for
 no idleness was there;
 And five and forty years now had
 thus come and gone,
 And the gear was aye growing, but
 the laird had grizzly hair;
 Then his old mother sickened in the
 fall of the year
 When most she was needed, as the
 long nights came,
 And before the oak leaves were yellow
 all and sere
 He laid her in the kirkyard with the
 rest of his name.

He laid her in the kirkyard, and
 turned round his head,
 With a lump in his throat and a tear
 in his eye,
 And thanked us for the honour we
 had shown to the dead,
 And also he was glad that the day
 had been dry;
 Could his mother but have known, the
 house had been right
 His friends to receive, as they surely
 ought to be,
 And a proud woman she would have
 been that night
 To witness the respect of such a good
 company.

Then he took off his hat, and took
from its crown
A yard of red cotton, and bowed to
us low,
“Cried gee!” to the cart horse, and
then sat him down
Just where the coffin lay a little while
ago;
And home came the poor laird, and
went to the byre,
And patted brown Crummie, his old
mother’s pet,
And stared at her hens, and her ducks
in the mire,
And vowed they should live, though
they brought him in debt.

What could he do then? He tried
for a time
“The Fourfold State” of the children
of men;
Good were the words, and the doctrine
was prime,
But it was a week day, and who could
read then?
Not one good thought got he into
his mind
Of all that the good man tried hard
to say;
And the more that he read, the more
he grew blind,
And oh but his old heart was “dowie
and wae.”

At last, looking round to “the lass”
at her wheel,
“Jeanie,” he said, “will ye bring
your stool near?
My mother’s awa’, but I think she
would feel
Better pleased if I went on as when
she was here.
I’ve tried hard to read, but, instead of
the book,
I see her old face, Jeanie, there where
she sat,

And how, when she gave me a check,
she would look—
And we had not half finished the
game we were at.”

So the laird and his Jeanie sat down
by the fire,
With the cruse and the rushwick to
light up their play;
And she played her game well both in
kitchen and byre,
For Crummie grew sleek and Cobairdy
grew gay.
And now she’s the “leddy,” as braw
as the best,
And sits in the parlour, and dines in
the hall,
And her picture is hung by the laird’s,
with the rest
Of the red coats and farthingales high
on the wall.

DONALD TOSHACH

HIGHLAND LAND IMPROVER

Big and burly and jolly and strong,
Nineteen stone if he weighs a pound,
Yet as he strides, with his gun, among
The corries and hills where the game
is found,
How light is his step o’er the heathery
ground!

For his wind is sound, and his heart
is gay;
There’s a dash of Norse blood in that
light-haired Celt,
And his enterprise, and his dashing
way
He got from the Vikings of old, that
dwelt
In the ships or the brochs where the
sea is smelt.

Great is his laughter, and needs but
the half

Of a joke to set it in roaring trim ;
And as you list to that great, glad laugh,
You would give something to laugh
like him,

For it seems to go rolling through
every limb.

Shrewd at an argument, always keen,
Celt-like, to reason of things divine,
Yet not, like the Celt, upon faith to lean,
And pelt you with Scriptures line
upon line ;

For texts to him are like sips of wine :

So he goes groping half in the dark,—
Half in the dark, but he swears it is
day—

Like one in a deep mine working stark,
By a flickering lamp that shoots its ray,
And shows the dark, if it shows not
the way.

But his strength is in action, in setting
the folk

Road-making, bridge-building, plant-
ing trees,

Draining the marshes, and blasting the
rock,

Or reaping the harvest of the seas,
Making the idlest busy as bees.

Watch him sitting on some grey stone,
And overlooking the moorland brown ;
What are his thoughts as he broods
alone ?—

Of forests where now only heather is
grown,

And the homesteads and mills, when
it shall be his own.

“Yonder the mansion shall stand on
its lawn,

The hills shall be covered with larch
and pine,

Here shall the flowering shrubs glow
in the dawn,

And the wasted torrents shall all combine
To be a power and a slave of mine.

“God made no part of His earth to lie
Waste as this is, with idle men
Watching the wild birds as they fly,
Orred deer cropping the brackened glen,
Or the salmon seeking the streams
again.

“The corn may mildew, alas, on the
field,

And the hay lie wasted there where it
grew ;

Yet something there is which the land
should yield,

Something there must be for man to do
Other than sport the whole year
through.”

Then will he buy a big lump of the
shire,

And men from the isles will come at
his call,

To trench it, and fence it with stone
and wire,

Five hundred Islesmen strong and tall,
Able workers at ditch and wall.

And slicing it up into small estates,
Planning houses and carriage-ways,
And winding paths with their wicket
gates,

And planting thick on the hills and
braes,

He toils through the sunny summer
days.

Neighbours laugh at him, call him mad,
Prophesy death to his million trees,
Mock at his schemes, and are almost
glad

Of any mishap that they can seize
To show they were right in their
auguries.

Till some day, lo ! the five hundred men
Shoulder their picks, and march away
Back to their Western Isles again ;
But twenty freeholders come, and they
Pitch their tents, for they mean to stay.

They love not idle folk there to see,
But they pay for work with their
crowns and groats ;
And they would have people strong
and free
With kindlier crofts, and warmer cots,
And they are many—and they have
votes.

But steeped in pride from the toe to
the crown,
Steeped in debt too up to the lip,
The neighbours askance at them look
and frown,
And try to hold on with a firmer grip,
Lest from their hands the County slip.

But not for that does he toil and
scheme ;
What cares he for their party wars,
Could he but rouse them from their
dream
To care for the people, and heal their
scars,
And grow what Nature not debars ?

But what they want is a solitude,
A land that hath no neighbour folk,
Nor any work for the common good,
But only a desert of bog and rock,
Where the antlered stag and his hinds
may flock.

“For deer and gilliedom are our
curse,”
So he vows in his stormy way,
“Making the lazy clansman worse,
As he lives on the thrifless Saxon’s pay
With two months work, and ten
months play.”

Then will he turn and say, “’Tis time
I made a nest for myself at last ;
I have been changing soil and clime
Only for others, but that is past ;
Where shall my own lot now be cast ? ”

Yonder a waste and lonely land
Of bog and rock by a spreading lake :
There shall a goodly mansion stand,
And glade and garden he will make,
And all the hills into leafage break.

Yet when he looks on his finished home,
Garth and forest and mansion too,
How shall he spend the days to come,
Now there is nothing for him to do ?
Ah, he must find out something new.

Fair is the house beside the lake,
And it rings with the voices of child
and guest ;
But there his pleasure he cannot take,
It is no pleasure for him to rest ;—
Making a new world still is best.

Sell it off for a rocky isle ;
There will he fashion a busy life ;
Bleak as the land is, it shall smile
For ragged children and drudging wife,
For there the wealth of the sea is rife.

Oats will not ripen, and barley fails,
But the grass in the glens is green and
sweet,
And the Lochs shall gleam with the
fishers’ sails,
And the coves shall smile with houses
neat,
While the flocks in the glen shall
browse and bleat.

O Rocky Isle in the western sea,
Rouse thee on every cape and bay ;
Now listless slumber is not for thee,
But curing and coopering all the day,
And launching of boats on the ocean
spray.

Oh for a hundred such as he !
 They tell me he will be ruined soon :
 Pity ! and yet his work will be
 Stirring and brisk as a merry tune,
 E'en should he wane like a waning
 moon.

Industry has its martyrs too,
 And one might die in a worser cause ;
 Yet do I hope he will live to view
 A people living by wholesome laws,
 And thriving homes where the sea-
 gull was.

For his brain is shrewd, and his
 schemes have thriven,
 As schemes never throve on these
 hills before ;
 And why should he miss of the bless-
 ing of Heaven,
 Now that his wits and his skill are
 more ?
 Oh, your prophets of evil are fain
 to prate
 If you scratch but the moss from their
 altar stones ;
 But what do they know of the Gods
 and Fate,
 More than old wives from their aching
 bones ?

IONA

LONE green Isle of the West,
 Where the monks, their coracle
 steering,
 Could see no more, o'er the wave's
 white crest,
 Their own loved home in Erin ;
 Shrouded often in mist,
 And buried in cloud and rain ;
 Yet once by the light of a glory kissed,
 Which nothing can dim again !

O'er tangled and shell-paved rocks
 The white sea-gulls are flying ;

And in the sunny coves brown flocks
 Of wistful seals are lying ;
 The waves are breaking low,
 Hardly their foam you trace ;
 All hushed and still, as if they know
 This is a sacred place.

The diving guillemot
 Is preening his dappled feather ;
 The great merganser shows his throat,
 Red in this summer weather ;
 And bathed in a tremulous light
 Are minster, cross, and grave,
 That call up the past with a spell of
 might,
 To tell of the meek and brave.

No fitter day than this
 To look on thy mystic beauty,
 And brood on memories of the bliss
 Of faith and love and duty,
 Of the hours of quiet prayer,
 Of the days of patient toil,
 Of the love that always and every-
 where,
 Burned like a holy oil.

O lone green Isle of the West,
 So oft by the mist enshrouded,
 I have seen thee to-day in thy quiet
 best,
 Not noisily mobbed, and crowded ;
 Seen thee in flooding light,
 Seen thee in perfect calm ;
 Yet am I sad as at the sight
 Of mummy that men embalm.

Isle of the past and gone,
 The life from thee has departed ;
 Thy best is now but a carven stone,—
 And a memory lonely-hearted !
 Yet thou wert a power erewhile,
 O'er the great world's mind and heart ;
 But where now the priests of the Holy
 Isle
 And the skill of its graceful Art ?

Cunning the hand that wrought
 Your traceried tombs and crosses,
 And silvern brooches, that yet are
 brought
 From depths of the black peat mosses ;
 And theirs was a holy work
 Who carried the gospel pure
 And letters and work and the homely
 kirk,
 Our heathen ills to cure.

Was it the Norseman's sword,
 And the ships of Thor and Odin
 That drove the saints, with the sacred
 Word,
 From the peaceful ways they trod in ?
 Was it the Saxon's sway,
 Brutal and selfish and strong,
 That swept the beautiful Art away,
 And stifled the Celtic song ?

Only this do we know,
 The Celt brought light to the Teuton,
 And ever the knowledge of God did
 grow
 In the land he set his foot on ;
 But as they throve he pined,
 But as they smiled he sighed,
 But as they grew he surely dwined,
 And in their life he died.

O passion of holy love !
 O sacrificial people,
 Dying to lift men's thoughts above
 By altar and cross and steeple !
 Through stormy seas ye passed,
 And moor and marsh and fen,
 To be left behind in the march at last
 As weak exhausted men !

They say ye shall rise again
 On the level Western prairie,
 With a larger life and a keener brain,
 Like eagle out of his eyrie ;
 But not the mind and the heart
 That grew by the Lochs and Bens,

Nor the plaintive song, and the mystic
 Art
 Nursed in the rushy glens.

THE CRY OF THE MAIDEN SHAREHOLDERS¹

Pity us, God ! there are five of us here,
 With threescore years on the youngest
 head,
 Five of us waiting in sorrow and fear—
 Well for our widowed one she is dead !
 Day and night sitting, we've not laid
 a head
 Down on a pillow this week and more ;
 Trembling has seized on us, shrinking
 and dread,
 To hear the bell ring, or be seen at
 the door.

Pity us, pity, O God !

Pity us, God ! when our father died,
 His mind was at ease, for he left us
 "shares,"
 And a roof o'er our head too ; and
 side by side,
 Happy and loving, we faced life's
 cares.
 Then we were young, but now feeble
 and old,
 And we never wronged any as far as
 we knew,
 And we tried to do right with our
 silver and gold,
 And the poor had their portion, the
 Church had its due.

Pity us, pity, O God !

¹ These Verses appeared in *The Scotsman* newspaper at the time of the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank. And now I reprint them, chiefly because I wish to make grateful acknowledgments to the unknown friends whose generosity enabled me greatly to help those poor ladies till their affairs were finally settled.

Pity us, God! we would work if
 we could,
 But suppler fingers must stitch and hem;
 And who would give us our morsel
 of food,
 Though we span and knitted all day
 for them?
 We never knew work, but to keep
 ourselves neat,
 And we never knew want, but our
 wants are small,
 And there's bread in the house yet if
 we could eat,
 But the sickness of sorrow is mixed
 with it all.

Pity us, pity, O God!

Pity us, God! must our little things go?
 All—even our mother's things, cher-
 ished with care?

Must we leave the old house—the one
 house that we know?

But not for the poorhouse—Oh, surely
 not there?

Could they not wait a while?—we
 will not keep them long;

We would live on so little too, cheer-
 ful and brave;

But to leave the old house where old
 memories throng

For the poorhouse, oh! rather the
 peace of the grave,

Pity us, pity, O God!

Pity us, God! as for those who
 have wrought

This terrible ruin so wide and deep,
 Oh, how could they do it, and know
 it not?

How could they know it, and think
 or sleep?

But we would not, one of us, change,
 this day,

Our lot for theirs, for our hands are
 clean;

And the bankrupt soul has a darker
 way

Than the way of the honest poor ever
 has been.

Pity us, pity, O God!

IN MEMORIAM—DR. JOHN BROWN

O SWEET and pure and tender heart,
 With the child's gift to pray and play,
 Thou, artless in thy perfect art,
 Could'st blissful tears to us impart,
 And smile the blissful tears away.

Most human thou of humankind,
 What wealth of love accrued to thee!
 To thee dumb creatures looked to find
 The meanings which their wistful mind
 Was groping for, and could not see.

We were the better for the mirth,
 We were the better for the tears,
 We were the better seeing worth,
 In the dumb creatures of the earth,
 Their loves, their efforts, and their
 fears.

Not all could comprehend thy mirth,
 Thy dainty humour playing round
 All things that be; yet heaven and
 earth

Thine awe and wonder still called forth,
 For all to thee was holy ground.

We are so little; God requires,
 The greatness of His thoughts to
 prove,
 Some altars burning with strange fires,
 Some songs not meant for sacred
 choirs,
 Some souls that shun the common
 groove.

And thou—thy smile was like a prayer,
Thy humour like a psalm of praise ;
They mingled with the holiest there
Where hearts breathe out their grief
and care
To Him that Ancient is of Days.

Yet oftentimes that smile was seen
Kindling the near edge of a cloud
That gathered o'er thy soul serene,
And haunted thee with anguish keen,
And bitter wailing low or loud.

That cloud is past of fear and doubt ;
But ah ! this other cloud that lies
With hush of silence all about,
And opens to let no man out,
And hides thee from our wistful
eyes !

We gaze at it with brimming tears ;
Vain all our yearning looks and fond ;
No smile upon its edge appears ;
And yet the faith is wise that hears
A voice say, All is light beyond.

KILDROSTAN

ACT I.—SCENE I.

CHORUS.

POOR fishers on the wild west shore
Where slow mists trail along the hills,
And from the mist comes evermore
The sound of rushing brooks and rills,
Are plodding, grave, with lingering feet,
About the high hot noon of day,
Along the circle of the street
That straggles round the circling bay.

'Neath crags and hills the long loch
winds

Through rocky isles where sea-birds
flock ;

Along the slopes the grey birch finds
Frail footing on the slaty rock ;

On every ledge there grows a pine
With roots that cling as the branches toss,
And the oaks along the low sea-line
Are greenly feathered with fern and
moss.

Behind the cliffs are mountains steep
By foaming torrents scored and scarred,
And up their gullies the adders creep,
But the peaks are ragged and jagged
and barred :

Cloud-capped often their stormy tops,
While ridge and corrie and crag are
bare,

Or a girdle of mist will ring the slopes,
While the heights rise clear in the
upper air.

A desolate land of fern and moss,
Of bracken braes and craggy hills,

And shores where fickle waters toss,
And birch-and-hazel-fringed rills,
And foaming cataracts like snow
That in the gorges leap and run,
And rocks, ice-polished long ago,
That gleam like waters in the sun,
And gorgeous sunsets that enfold
The mountains with a purple robe,
And dash the crimson and the gold
In billowy spray about the globe :
A land of wayside cairns—the place
Of resting for the biers of death—
And tokens of a fading race,
And relics of forgotten faith—
Legend and rhyme and mystic rite,
The worship of a God unknown,
Stealthily done at dead of night
By sacred well or standing stone.
Oh marvel not they love the land
Who watch its changeful hills and skies,
For in its desolation grand
A charm of 'wilder beauty lies.

A meagre life they have, and still—
Not stiller almost is the grave—
Those villagers beneath the hill
That looks down on the long sea-wave ;
Rude are the huts of stone and turf
That straggle round the circling street,
The thatched roofs soaked with rain
or surf,
And blackened with the smoking peat.
No ploughshare tears the scanty soil,
Enough for them are spade and hoe ;
'Tis on the waters that they toil,
And in the seas their harvests grow.

The moors are for the hare and grouse,
The corries for the antlered stag,
But shaggy big-horned cattle browse
On the fringe of bracken and rush
and flag.

And now and then comes like a dream
A white-sailed yacht into the bay,
And now and then a snort of steam
Sounds from the headland far away ;
But never shows the world's proud strife,
Its strain of power, and rush of thought :
Time counts for nothing in their life,
But comes and goes, and changes nought.
Yet men have grown there, true and
brave,

Bronzed with weather, and horny
of hand,
Who wrestled with the problems grave
That at the porch of Wisdom stand ;
And you shall find in low, thatched cot,
Round - angled, and with smoke
begrimed,

Love that can sweeten every lot,
And Faith that hath all fates sublimed.
But why are the long-oared boats afloat ?
Why tolls the bell from the steepled
kirk ?

It is not the hour to launch the boat,
And it is not the Sabbath of rest from
work ;

And why are the children sad and grave,
With no ripple of mirth by the rippling
wave ?

And whither away do the strong
men walk,
While the women gather in groups
and talk ?

SCENE.—*Village Street of Kinloch-Thorar.
Group of Women at the Post Office Door.*

First Fisherwoman.—Ochone ! but
his iss a sad day on Loch Thorar,
Mrs. Slit.

Mrs. Slit.—You may say that,
Lizbeth, and in Glen Shelloch too,
and Glen Turret, which iss more.

First Fisherwoman.—He wass a
good man, and a faithful minister. He
wass not a dumb dog that will be
gnawing the bones, and will not bark
when he should.

Mrs. Slit.—Och yes ! he wass all
that, though he might not preach like
Black Rory of Skye, or big John of
Strathnaver. But he would not be
passing my shop door without getting
pickles of snuff for the old men, and
sweeties too for the bairns. Yes, yes !
it will not be the same shop now that
he does not come here any more.

Second Fisherwoman.—But what iss
this, Mrs. Slit ; Miss Ina will not be
for burying him in the kirkyard, but in
Isle-Monach, where my Donald would
be seeing ghosts at Yule and Pasch.

Mrs. Slit.—It iss your Donald that
would be having the whisky, then. For
they are quiet men, the monks, when
they are living, and they will not be
frisky now that they are in their graves.

Second Fisherwoman.—But they are in
Purgatory, whatever ; and our minister
had no faith in Purgatory, or organs or
saints or good works. Why would
she be for burying him among them ?
Iss it Papist she will be turning ?

First Fisherwoman.—Or Pagan, Mrs.
Slit ? For our May wass saying she
would read more about heathen gods
and goddesses than about Abraham or
Moses ; and May wass maid in the
manse till Candlemas last.

Mrs. Slit.—May will not know what
young ladies have to know. And
which iss more, she might do better
than to be talking about her betters.
As for Purgatory, it iss not any more,
since the laird's great grandfather for-
bade it, or it will only be for the poor
cottars at Glen Chroan. And whether
or no, our minister's daughter will have
nothing to do with it, you may be sure.

But it iss true Miss Ina never wass just like other maids. But her heart iss good, whatever, yes! and which iss more, it iss soft and wass warm as a lintie's nest, and sweeter as the bog-myrtle.

Third Fisherwoman.—Och yes! it will be warm and sweet, but not good, Mrs. Slit. None of our hearts iss good, as he would often say, who will never say it any more. But many a time, when the lads wass out fishing, it iss Miss Ina that would hail them from her bit boatie, and she would have the kind word for each of them; yes! and she would call at our doors too on her way home, and tell us about Dugald or Donald or Alisthair and the herrings. Och yes! she hass the kind heart, whatever, and it will be a sorry one this day.

First Fisherwoman.—Yes! she hass the kind heart, Miss Ina; and if she would have the making of the law, it would be the better for us, though it iss true she iss for making the men carry the peats, and wade out to the boats too, which it would be a shame for women to see.

Second Fisherwoman.—But whose boat will she be having, now? For it iss a rhyme I heard long ago—

Coffined corpse in fisher's boat;
Make ready a shroud when it's next afloat.

Mrs. Slit.—The de'il an ye were in your shroud, woman, to speak of such a thing! Do you know that it iss Sir Diarmid himself that will bring his gig, and his gillies, and his piper too, all in the brave tartan, with plaid and sporran, as if the minister would be a chief, for he was not more than third cousin to the laird's grandfather. And it iss the chief that you would be singing your carline rhymes about, and making a shroud for him too!

Second Fisherwoman.—But he iss not a fisher.

Mrs. Slit.—He will fish more than your Donald, whatever: for when Donald iss in the humour, the loch iss never in trim; and when the loch iss in the humour, he hass no inclination. But it iss not for you, woman, to be speaking of the laird and a shroud in one breath, and him a brave young gentleman, and which iss more, just growing the beautiful beard too. Yes!

First Fisherwoman.—But why will she be for burying him among the monks, when there iss a Christian kirkyard at her door, Mrs. Slit?

Mrs. Slit.—Who hass a better right to lie there? For he comes of the old stock that built the Abbey Kirk; and all their graves are there, and there iss nobody else but chiefs and monks and ministers and superior persons, which iss proper. There has not been a burial there since old Sir Kenneth's, the day of the great storm, when half our boats wass wrecked, and the poor lads were bobbing about the loch, like pellocks in a gale of wind.

Third Fisherwoman.—Ochone! yes; and it is myself will mind it, if I am spared to my dying day. My Alisthair, that wass to be married just the week after, drifted ashore among the tangles before his Mysie's door, and she will never be herself again since that fery hour. And it wass Miss Ina that would have the bodies carried to the kirk, and the funeral there; for they will preach to us, said she, better than the minister, or an angel from heaven.

First Fisherwoman.—Sure, and she wass right there, for there would not be a profane swearer or a Sabbath-breaker in the parish for six months after, though the whisky wass wanted for the sore heart sometimes, maybe.

Mrs. Slit.—Yes! it wass a great sermon, the lads lying in a row, and just the day before they had talked to us, and which iss more, they had laughed with us; and now they looked at us, and would not know us any more. Och yes! it wass a great sermon, and it wass God himself that preached it. But there, now; they are leaving the manse. It iss our own lads that will be carrying the coffin, with its white wreaths and ferns. Och! and Sir Diarmid and Miss Ina make the handsome pair, like the brown pine and the bonnie birch tree. She iss liker him than that Doris, with her mouth that is always smiling, and her eyes that never do.

First Fisherwoman.—But they will be saying he must marry Doris, whatever.

Mrs. Slit.—Maybe yes, maybe no. It iss not every fish you hook that comes to the creel; and the stag iss not on the spit because Donald has loaded his gun. And that will be her uncle, the Doctor, that wass the ne'er-do-well, and nearly broke his brother's heart, and which is more, emptied his purse too. But he iss come home now, they say, as rich as the English lord at Loch Eylert. Sure they will rest the coffin somewhere for his cairn, and for the drop whisky there. And now Eachan Macrimmon is playing a coronach as it were for a chief: "Peace to his soul, and a stone to his cairn."

CHORUS.

Slowly the muffled oars dip in the tide,
 Slowly the silent boats shadow-like
 glide
 Past the grey, steepled kirk, past the
 low manse,
 Now in the ripples that glimmer and
 glance

Where the sun flashes, and now in
 the shade
 The birch-feathered rocks and the
 great hills have made;
 Slowly and silently onward they pass
 Over the calm spaces shining like glass,
 While the wild wailing strains of the
 coronach swell,
 And fall with the breeze and the slow-
 tolling bell.
 Long, low and dark is the first of
 the train,
 With six bending oars keeping time to
 the strain;
 In it a coffin, and by it a maiden
 Who to the moaning sea moans
 sorrow-laden,
 As they drop down to the dim abbey
 pile
 Lying half-hid in a cleft of the isle,
 Ruined and roofless, 'mid tangle of
 trees
 That dip their low boughs in the wave,
 but the breeze
 Rustles their higher leaves over a tower
 Green with massed ivy, and crown'd
 with wall-flower.
 There, with his forefathers, peaceful
 to sleep
 By the white surf of the unresting
 deep,
 Where once the Culdee monk toiled,
 prayed, and died,
 Where once the galleys oared out in
 their pride,
 Where still the clansmen their high
 chiefs bewail,
 Silent they laid the good priest of
 the Gael.

No cross was reared above his head,
 No requiem was sung or said,
 No hope was spoken of the just
 In glory rising from the dust:
 In silent awe they did their part,
 Yet the good hope was in every heart.

ACT I.—SCENE II.

CHORUS.

A little wiry man, with grizzled hair,
And withered face that wrinkled was
and bare,
And clear, keen eyes that had no look
of care,

Sat with a maid
All robed in black, herself a lily white,
Beautiful as the moon in starless night
Whose silent depths alternate wondrous
light,

And mystic shade.

Blunt in his speech, a careless nature his,
A wanderer driven by restless impulses,
And years had not yet toned his
heedlessness,

Nor loss nor gain :
And nothing awed him that the world
reveres,
Yet was he awed before a maiden's
tears,
And stumbled in his talk, with doubts
and fears

Of giving pain.

He would be gentle, if he but knew how,
And helpful, if his gold could help
her now,

But wist not of the deeper life, I trow,
Patient and meek ;
And woman's ways had long been
strange to him,
And eyes, unused to weeping, now
grew dim
Seeing her eyes in shining waters swim,
And tear-stained cheek.

SCENE—*The Manse Parlour.* INA and DR.
LORNE *searching books and papers.*

Dr. Lorne.

This clean bewilders me: it is like being
Lost in a mist, and wandering round
and round,

To end where you began, only more
puzzled,
Weary and hopeless. What can he
have done
With it, I wonder.

Ina.

Uncle, what is wrong ?

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, nothing's wrong of course. It's
only I
Am growing old and stupid, I suppose.
I'm puzzled, that is all.

Ina.

But what about ?
And can I help you? Yet if it is dark
To you, I fear that my poor head
to-day
Can bring but little light.

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, never mind ;
I should not speak of it: it does not
matter—
Not in the least.

Ina.

What matters anything,
In this blank desolation ?

Dr. Lorne.

Don't now, Ina ;
I shan't know what to do if you break
down ;
And people die, but still the world
goes on,
And those who live must eat, and pay
their bills,
And think of things.

Ina.

Ay! that's the pity of it—
To come straight from the shadows
and the lights,
The awe and mystery and sacred
sorrow

About the grave, to life's poor
commonplace—
Not yet, at least, I cannot do it yet.

Dr. Lorne.

Well, no ; but then I've seen so many
drop—
Comrades and friends—and had to
carry on
The battle, or be beaten : one has
hardly
Time here for feelings.

Ina.

May one come to that ?
Were it not better not to be than live
To find no time for what is best in us,
What purifies and elevates and makes
A larger world than our small round
of tasks ?
Ah me ! a dreary outlook.

Dr. Lorne.

Not at all :
But for this business, now, no doubt
it will
Be cleared up some day.

Ina.

What is there to clear ?

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, nothing. You must not be
troubled yet
With business. But your father now,
he never
Went in for iron "rings" or
"corners," did he, Ina ?
And no sharp fellows ever talked
him over,
And blew him up with hopes of
boundless wealth,
Which by and by collapsed, and left
him broken ?

Ina.

I do not understand.

Dr. Lorne.

Of course, you don't :
No more did he. You never heard
him speak
Of mines, I daresay—copper mines in
Spain,
Or silver in Peru, and how they paid
Fine dividends ? No, no ; you never
did.
Yet parsons burn their fingers some-
times there.

Ina.

I have known papers come to him,
which he
Flung in the fire, saying that it
was well
He had no gold to gamble with.

Dr. Lorne.

Quite right ;
One needs to know the game to play
with these
Sharp fellows. Well ; no doubt, he
never printed
A learned Book now—one that would
not sell,
Was never meant to sell, but just to be
A splendid monument of erudition,
With costly illustrations, setting forth
Highland antiquities, and early arts
Now lost in their descendants, which
he sent
To all the letters of the alphabet,
Who voted him their thanks ? He
might have done it ;
But no, he didn't ? I'm at my wit's
end now.
And after all, he could not drop
that way
More than a thousand or so.

Ina.

What do you mean ?

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, nothing; never mind; I'm only stupid,
Let's talk of something else. We're rich enough.
There; dry your eyes. I don't suppose you could
Smile on me now to say I have not vexed you.

Ina.

Indeed you have not, uncle; but I wish
That I could clear up your perplexity,
Whate'er it be.

Dr. Lorne.

No matter. By the way,
Was not the Chief most kind to do him honour,
Bearing him to his grave with kilted men
And pipers, though I hate both kilts and pipes.

Ina.

Indeed, he is a noble gentleman,
And held my father high in his esteem.
He was his pupil once—

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, and you learnt
Lessons together?—Latin and Greek and Hebrew?
'Twas all the old chap knew.

Ina.

There you are wrong, sir;
Oh, he knew many things, and taught me much
I now remember only to regret
I did not learn it better.

Dr. Lorne.

That's the way
With me too. What a deal I have forgotten

Since he and I were boys, and went to school!

Well; I must see the Chief, of course, and thank him:

It is worth thanks, although that strutting piper

Looked like a turkey-cock, and yelled as mad

As e'er a wild cat. After that we'll go

Off to Glen Chroan, and my house shall have

At last its mistress. Never wind blew yet

But it brought luck to some one, though 'tis sad

My house is filled by emptying of his.

Ina.

You are most kind, good uncle. But indeed

I have not thought yet what I ought to do.

It seems as if I could not think, for when

I try to knit my mind to any end,
My head goes swimming round, and all is blank.

Dr. Lorne.

Yes, yes! I understand. But there's no hurry,

Nor need of thinking either. You may leave

All that to me. You shall have pretty rooms,

And nestle like a dainty lady-bird
In a blush rose.

Ina.

That never was my dream
Of life; I'd prove a restless lady-bird.
I have my work to do. Death sets one thinking

What to make of one's life—how best to use it.

Dr. Lorne.

Work! Oh, your mothers' meetings,
 Sunday schools,
 Sick-visittings, and mending poor folk's
 ways—
 I wish they'd take a turn at mending
 ours;
 We need it. Well; our clachan is
 as like
 A Sontal village in the jungle lands
 As one muck-heap is like another;
 filled
 With lazy hulking men, hard-featured
 women
 Who slave for them, and ragged dirty
 children
 Brimful of mischief and original sin.
 Work enough there to keep your hands
 full, Ina,
 And see no end to it.

Ina.

That's very bad,
 Have they no minister?

Dr. Lorne.

You women, now,
 Think that a minister is everything,
 That if you plant a parson on a moor,
 He'll make an Eden of it, just by
 dropping
 His texts and preachments to the right
 and left—
 Well, yes, there is a minister, but he
 Is twenty miles away, and might as well
 Be twenty thousand. They are mostly
 there
 Of the old Roman way.

Ina.

But there will be a priest then?

Dr. Lorne.

Ay, he comes now and then, and gives
 their souls

A hasty wipe that leaves them as
 they were
 Ere a week's over.

Ina.

And can you do nothing?

Dr. Lorne.

Me, Ina! It is hardly in my line
 To cast out devils. They'd turn and
 preach at me.
 I give the priest his dinner, and the
 children
 Pennies to wash their faces.

Ina.

Ah, poor folk,
 With none to care for them.

Dr. Lorne.

But now you're coming
 Home with me, and they'll maybe do
 for you
 What is like sowing corn upon the rocks
 Among the whelks and limpets, when
 I try it.
 Ina, I can't say pretty things to you:
 I've not a bit of sentiment in me,
 And never had: I take my stand
 on facts,
 And do not blow my feelings into
 bubbles
 To see them break, and break my
 heart for them.
 But see, my house is nothing but
 a house,
 Till you shall make a home of it—
 a nook
 Where the old dog may curl up in
 the sun,
 And sleep away his age.

Ina.

But I have neither
 The wealth nor will to lead an idle life.

Dr. Lorne.

Well, there is ample work in our
wild Clachan—
Souls to be saved, and bodies to
be healed,
And dirt enough to cleanse. And as
for wealth,
We'll ruffle it with the best, if that
will please you.

Ina.

That is not what I mean. We High-
land maidens
Like independence, uncle.

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, you'd rather
A trifle of your own than hang on me?
And so you should have had, and that
is just
What puzzles me. Your father made
a will,
Only there was not anything to will
Except a squash of sermons.

Ina.

How could he
Have aught to leave, with only this
poor parish?
You know his hand was open.

Dr. Lorne.

If his head
Had been but half as open to ideas!
But that was always shut, and his
hand never.

Ina.

He was a good man, uncle.

Dr. Lorne.

Far too good.
There should have been a world made
just for him,
Where no rogues grew, for never
idle tramp

Whined at his door, I wager, but
he fingered
Some of his coppers. He was never
wise.

Ina.

Yet goodness has a wisdom of its own,
And oft sees deeper than a shrewder wit.
And since I saw him lying cold
and dead,
The idea of his life, which my
poor breath
Had sometimes clouded, seems to
come out clear,
And pure, and shining with a saintly
beauty.

Dr. Lorne.

Yes, yes, a saint; but saints, you
know, are not
For earth, but heaven. I pray you,
do not set
The pretty fountains of these eyes
a-playing,
Or you shall quite unman me. I'm
at sea
About that will of his—that you
should be
Left penniless, and even more, that I
Should somehow have been cheated.
Did you never
Hear of my being dead in India?

Ina.

Yes, years ago, and oh, how bitterly
He mourned for you.

Dr. Lorne.

And yet I dare be sworn
He never said a prayer for my poor soul,
Although he feared 'twas in an evil case.
He might have risked the heresy upon
The chance of giving me a lift somehow.
No matter. Was there nothing came
to him
From India then?

Ina.

No, nothing ; but some debts
Of yours—they were not much—he
had to pay,
Which pinched us for a while.

Dr. Lorne.

The devil it did !

Some debts of mine, and no memo-
rial else
Of his dead brother !

Ina.

But you were not dead.

Dr. Lorne.

True ; but you see I was the prodigal
O' the family, and had eaten my
swine's husks ;
And though I did not pine for fatted
calves,
I thought of him, old fellow, — the
elder brother,
Who was not a curmudgeon. At
that time
It suited my convenience to be dead,
Or to be thought so for a while at least,
I'll tell you more some day. Old
uncles, Ina,
Are mostly useful when they're dead ;
and I,
Living, had been a sorrow to my folk,
A vagabond that had no touch of grace,
And now, it seems, my dying did
no better.
Well ; I must see to this ; there's
plainly some
Rogue-work to ferret out, and I will
do it.
No money ! and even debts of mine
to pay !

Ina.

Nay, do not think of them ; they were
but trifles,
And cheerfully he paid them for
the honour

Of your good name, and would have
done far more
To know that you were living.

Dr. Lorne.

But it looks

As if I had shammed death to get
my bills

Settled for me ; and that is bad.

Moreover,

'Tis plain I have been tricked and
overreached,

And that I can't abide, and never could.

They'll need their wits who play that
game with me.—

I daresay now you did without a frock,
Until those debts were paid, and turned
and trimmed

Old hats with faded ribbons. My
poor Ina,

You shall be dressed the handsomer
for that,

There's plenty for us both, lass, at
Glen Chroan—

Big empty rooms that will have ghosts
betimes

If you come not to lay them, and
a waste

Of meat and drink for lack of
house-keeping.

'Tis somewhat lonely too ; old faces flit
About i' the gloaming, that I'd
rather not

Be seeing there ; and if you do not
come,

I'll sell it, and be off again. I'd rather
Squat by a jungle fire, and hear
the tigers

Growl in the nullah than sit there alone,
With gnawing mice and memories.

Ina.

No, Uncle,

You must not go off wandering again,
Although a life of indolence and ease
Fits not my humour.

Dr. Lorne.

Busy idleness
Is just a woman's work.

Ina.

Nay, I hope not.

[*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS.

Did she speak wholly
Truth? Was it solely
Work that she wanted?
Ah! life was tame there,
Change never came there,
And who shall blame her
If she was haunted
With the young craving
For doing and braving
In the world's battle,
And weary of mountains,
Lakes, woods, and fountains,
And slow sleepy cattle?

But why should she linger
There, if this hunger
Gnawed so within her?
Was there another,
More than a brother,
Hoping to win her?
Ah, who shall blame her?
Life was so tame there
Until he came there.

ACT I.—SCENE III.

CHORUS.

Ay me! but Death is cruel to the living,
Left to dim outlooks, and to vain
remorse;
Cruel and cold is Death, and unforgiving
The silent corse

In the old home, now still and
sorrow-stricken,
She sits alone, and passions her sharp
pain,

Fain to put from her aught that yet
might quicken
Her hope again.

Sweet scents are wafted from the
clover blossom,
Sweet songs are ringing from the earth
and sky,
Sweet lights are lingering on the Loch's
calm bosom,
Far off and nigh;

The swifts and swallows, from the
roofs and gables,
Twitter their gossip in the even-
ing light;
And the brooks, rippling o'er their
glossy pebbles,
Croon out of sight;

Flaming through curtain-clouds, the
sun is shining,
In gold and crimson wrapping sea
and shore;
While she a subtle sorrow sits refining
In her heart's core.

O empty home! O dim and dismal
chamber!

O vacant chair, and book he left
half-read!

O all the tender past, she can remember,
Seared now and dead.

And from that dead past points a
warning finger
Bidding her 'ware of that which she
loves most,
And on his silent lips the words yet
linger—
Love and be lost!

SCENE—*The Manse Library.* INA (*alone*).

Ina.

What could it be? what could he mean?
Ah me!
That half-told tale, just broken off
where all

The mystery was deepest, and the secret
 Now left to mere conjecture! All
 that night
 My love did comfort me; that was not
 wrong;
 God dropt it in my cup to sweeten it,
 And I was grateful for it, and I thought
 That it would comfort him too: so I
 told him.
 But he said, "No; you must not love
 him, child;
 Evil will come of it; I should have
 told you"—
 But when he would have told me, I
 could hear
 Only a whispered "Doris," and some
 sounds
 But half-articulate; and then the awe
 Of the dread change, the veil impalpable,
 Inscrutable, came over him, and he
 Carried the secret with him to the grave,
 And I may ask, but can no answer
 have.—
 They talk of spiritual forms that float,
 unseen,
 Around our lives, and hands that feel
 about us,
 And write on tables messages that mean
 Nothing or anything—just as we wish.
 But these are bubbles which the stream
 of thought,
 Fretting against its limits and obstruc-
 tions,
 Throws up in its dark eddies. There's
 nought in them.
 What though my father haunted this
 old room
 Where he kept company with other
 spirits,
 Wise in their day, embodied in these
 books
 So fondly read? Yet if he spoke to me
 I should not know if it were he that
 spoke,
 Or my own fancy: and what were I
 the better

Of such a presence, if it only hovered
 Silently in the unresponsive air,
 And knowing all, could give no help
 at all,
 Or speaking out, could work no faith
 at all?
 Better for him "the better mansions"
 he
 So loved to speak of, and not worse
 for me.
 The misery is the silence; and the
 silence
 Is never broken. Death can hold its
 peace,
 Let life go wailing onward as it may.
 Ah me! the mystery of it! all is dark;
 Our little thoughts fly forth like gleam-
 ing sparks,
 Hammered from our hot hearts, and
 straightway die
 In the blank dark. What meant that
 half-told tale,
 And whispered "Doris"?

Enter MORAG.

Morag.

Ina, shall I bring
 The lamp now? In the gathering dusk
 of gloaming
 Our thoughts grow eerie, for their
 shadows look
 Even bigger than themselves.

Ina.

Nay, this is best;
 Fittest the sombre light for sombre
 thought—
 The glimmer of a day that is no more
 To brood upon the loved that are no
 more.
 No lamp yet, Morag.

Morag.

Ina, you are wrong
 To nurse this sad and melancholy mood,
 To dream all day in settled loneliness,
 To pass, untasted, dishes from the table,

To see no callers coming in all kindness,
 To sit with folded hands and do
 no work,
 To look with blank fixed gaze at these
 old books,
 Yet reading ne'er a word, nor reading
 right
 God's providence, but hardly judging
 Him
 Because He does the best for us He can;
 And that's not much. The very stags
 that sicken
 Casting their horns, yet make their profit
 of them,
 Eating them up to make their bones
 the starker,
 As we should with our troubles.

Ina.

Leave me then

To feed upon my sorrows, and in truth
 They are hard eating.

Morag.

And you'll find it easier

To pity yourself than to find out God's
 meaning,

Who throws His letters down, that we
 may put

This one to that, and turn them into
 words.

Ina.

Indeed, I am not pitying myself;
 But the brisk current of my life is fallen
 A-slushing among reeds and rushes.

Morag.

What, then,

Has come of all your schemes for
 righting wrong

Among the crofters, and the fisher
 folk?

Ina.

Dreams, idle dreams! vain dreams of
 fond conceit,

As fruitless as the dewdrops that are
 strung

On gossamer threads o' chill October
 mornings.

I am an idle and a useless maid

That heard the far-off rumour of the
 world

Beyond these hills, and hoped to plant
 its thoughts

Among the heather, where they will
 not grow.

Morag.

There's to be no more school, then, for
 the women,

To train them for their housework, and
 to keep them

From bearing burdens women should
 not bear,

And dragging harrows too, like horses?

Ina.

Truly

They would not heed me, neither men
 nor women:

It was the way their fathers did; why
 should they

Change the old customs?

Morag.

And the new stone-pier

That was to make safe harbourage for
 the boats:—

Ina.

Waits till the lads are drowned, for
 some would rather

The people went away. They told
 me girls

Should mind their seams, and practise
 at their scales,

Not meddle with men's matters.

Morag.

But the Chief?

Will he do nothing?

Ina.

That I do not know:

They say he is not rich, save in a kind

And generous heart. And oh, the
heart can do
So little, except—wish.

Morag.

You give up hope then?

Ina.

Morag, you've seen the Loch, on some
still evening,
Mirror each stone, and twig, and tuft
of fern,
And orange lichen on the rock, so clear
That which was substance, which was
only shadow
You scarce could tell, till suddenly a
breeze
Would blur it all, and there was
nothing left
But dim confusion. So it is with me
now.
Once every thing looked plain to me,
and truly
I did not well distinguish what was fact
And what was only fancy, and
now all
Is like those shadows gone. My heart
misgives me
Since he has left me.

Morag.

But why should it fail you?

Ina.

I did neglect plain duties here at home,
And therefore met but failure out of
doors,
And now I have no duties, and no home.

Morag.

Ina, your heart is low, as one will be
Who sits down in a mist instead of
stirring
To keep the blood warm. Were you
up and doing

You would be brisk and hopeful. Are
you meaning
To live now with your uncle?

Ina.

Wherefore not?

Morag.

They say there is no Sabbath in
his house.

Ina.

Well; we could bring it with us.

Morag.

But they tell me
It's like a devil's Sabbath, or a Fair
With guzzling, clinking glasses, bark-
ing dogs,
And cursing drovers.

Ina.

Nay, he is not strict,
As we are here; but that can
hardly be.

Morag.

And no one thinks of God but the
black man
Who keeps an idol cross-legged, like
a tailor,
Sitting upon a cow.

Ina.

Mere gossip, Morag;
But truly I am not enamoured of
My uncle's house, and sometimes I
have thought
'Twere best if you and I could
run away,
And find some simple home, and have
a roof
For Kenneth till his student days
are past.
Perhaps a woman has no fitter task
Than just to help a man to do
his work.

Morag.

O Ina, I have dreaded you would go
To that old heathen, and I could not
do it,
And yet I could not leave you. But
to live
With you and the boy Kenneth! I
will haste,
And write my cousin to look out
for us
A house beside the college.

Ina.

Nay, there is
No hurry, Morag; nothing yet is clear.

Morag.

Pity that lochs and hills and maids
should be
So fickle! It would be a happier world
If they could know their own minds
half an hour.
But that they never do.

Ina.

Enough of me:
There is no armour but it has its joints,
And where the joints are there the
arrow sticks,
And you who know me best know
where to seek
My weakest points: and maybe I
am fickle.
You cannot think more poorly of
me than
I think myself.

Morag.

I don't think poorly of you,
Although I see your faults. Why
will you shut
The door to every caller, and sit here
As lonely as a seal in some sea-cave,
Or heron dreaming by a moorland
burn?

Ina.

You would not have me lay aside
my grief,
Which has its healing virtue, for
the set
Phrases of cold condolence? Who
has called?

Morag.

Well; first there was Miss Doris.

Ina.

Do not speak
Of Doris. When the heart is at
its best,
And all its finer feelings tremulous
With some emotion it is bliss to feel,
There are some people—mostly
women too—
Who touch the spring of what is worst
in you,
As when you dream a happy dream,
and lo!
A hideous face leers on you.

Morag.

Well; I say not
That you lost much by sending her
away;
She's like a wasp whose drone has
little sense,
But its striped tail can sting. But
then My Lady
Was with her.

Ina.

Ay! they always are together;
The more's the pity. Can she have
some hold
On Lady Margaret? I've marked
of late
A change in her—a kind of frightened
look
And pleading way, and hesitating
speech,
As if she would, but dared not. Could
I think

Of aught but my own troubles, she
would be
A care to me.

Morag.

But, Ina, you should think
Of other things; for thinking of
yourself
Is hardly thought at all: and when
your head
Gives over puzzling, you will surely be
Just like the larch that, when it dies
a-top,
Begins to die all through, and we
may dig
A new grave in Isle - Monach.
After them,
We had a call too from the English
ladies
At Corrie-Eylert.

Ina.

Oh, they came to note
My way, my looks, and specially
my dress,
And to retail the gossip, as they went
Their round among the neighbours.

Morag.

Let me tell you
Folk's hearts are often better than
their habits:
They're sorry for you, but that's
not enough,
Because you are so sorry for yourself.

Ina.

That's a hard saying, Morag. Can
you think
My grief is for myself, and not for
him
Whom I have lost?

Morag.

Why should you grieve for him,
Because he is in heaven, and has
no care
Of writing sermons now, and is not so

Dead-weary of himself, as when he sat
There at his table, scratching with
a quill
To make words do what only deeds
can do.

Ina.

Hush, Morag; 'tis not meet that you
should speak,
Or I should hear such words. He
was my father,
You do not understand—you never
did;
And oh, I am so lonely.

Morag.

You were nearly
As lonely while he lived as you are now.
If he had ever, like a father, watched
What books you read, what thoughts
they bred in you,
What hours you kept, what friends
you had, if any,
What schemes were shaping in your
busy head,
Or even how you dressed! But you
might go
With any one, and anywhere, in rags,
And he would never notice. And
yourself
Have told me that he scarcely heeded
aught
But Firstly, except Secondly and
Lastly;
Write, writing, every day and all
day long.

Ina.

I will not hear you, Morag, this is cruel,
At such a time. If I was a malapert,
'Twere fitter to rebuke than second me.
Moreover, when I said that, 'twas
not he
I blamed, for he was good—oh, so
much better
Than I—and still with conscience
made his life

A sacrifice to duty, offering up
The sweetness and the gladness of
it all

To what his office claimed of him.

It was

The exigency of mistaken work,
The rigour of a wrong idea planted
In a true heart that never spared itself,
Made me so speak. But yet I
spake amiss,

And rightly now am humbled.

Pardon me,

Dear father, that I judged you wantonly
In petulance of youth. I had no
mother.

Morag.

Scold me well, Ina; it will do you
good.

I thought to rouse, and I have only
crushed you.

Nay, spare me not, an old conceited
fool!

Only, you are my bairn.

Ina.

There; go away.

I daresay you meant well, but there
are sores

May not be touched but with a skilful
hand,

Not with rough loving even. You
think I pity

Myself! I hate myself, when I re-
member

The failure of my duty and my love
To him; and yet the burden of my
sorrow

Is bound on me by what is best in me,
And when I part from it my good
departs,

Therefore I clasp it to my heart of
hearts.

CHORUS.

Ah me! but it is hard to hear
The echo of your own wrong thought

Which you were fain had been forgot,
Come jarring back upon your ear,
Come jarring back upon your heart,
And smite it with a keen remorse,
When you would shape a better course,
And hope to play a nobler part.

There, day by day, his hand would
write

New sermons, but the thought was
old—

Fresh-minting the same brass or gold,
And careful but to coin it right;

For with unshaken confidence
He stood upon the old safe ground,

And turned the problem round and
round,

And still brought out the same old
sense,

And hoped the world to overcome
By rounding periods; and she said
That it would be by sleep instead—
Oh, better that she had been dumb!

For now it all came back again,
The scratching of the patient quill,
The paper that he needs must fill,
All changed into a choking pain.

ACT I.—SCENE IV.

CHORUS.

All from the many-moulded door
On to the three-cusped window high,
Every stone on the pavement floor
Marks where the chiefs and their
kinsmen lie—

Dark slabs carved with the great
Cross-sword,

And the fish, and the galley, with
scrolls all round,

And dim-lettered texts from the Holy
Word;

But all in the damp moss swathed and
bound.

A sidewall long had in ruins lain,
 And oh but the carved work mouldered
 fast
 'Neath the suns, and the frosts, and
 the driving rain,
 And the tread of time, as it hastens past,
 And the seeds of life, and the wrath
 of man
 Casting down that which is fair to see,
 Some day to grieve that he never can
 Bring back the glory that wont to be.

There at the head of the late filled
 grave
 Sadly a youth and a maiden stood,
 And only the lap of the rippling wave
 Broke on the hush of their solitude ;
 Beautiful she, but as marble white,
 And looked like a monument planted
 there,
 Till a broad beam of the garish light
 Smote with a glory her golden hair.

SCENE—*Isle-Monach.* INA and KENNETH.

Ina.

Thanks, Kenneth. Now, I want to
 be alone.
 Come back for me an hour hence.

Kenneth.

Yes, Miss Ina ;

It is good to be here ; yes, for there
 are
 Good thoughts among the graves, and
 in the Islands ;
 Better than in the towns.

Ina.

What kind of thoughts ?

Kenneth.

Well ; dreams of peace, and memories
 of gladness ;
 And dreams and memories are all
 we have
 To live on in the Highlands.

Ina.

You are sad ;

What ails you, Kenneth ?

Kenneth.

Oh, these thoughts will come
 When nothing ails you, as the clouds
 do when
 The sun is brightest. You will not
 stay long ?

Ina.

No : but an hour is not too long to
 mourn
 For a dead Father.

Kenneth.

Yet it may be, Miss,

Too long to be alone here. For these
 isles

Are hollowed by sea-caves, and when
 you sit

Musing alone, and hear the water
 rushing

Around you, and beneath, it makes
 your breath

Come quick with fancies. I had once
 a cousin

Passed but a night on such an isle,
 and he

Nigh lost his wits ere morning, for he
 thought

That every streak of mist, and gleam
 of moonshine

Pointed and mowed and mocked and
 laughed at him,

So weird-like was the feeling of the
 place.

Ina.

Oh, nonsense, Kenneth. Are you
 superstitious

Like all the rest—and you a scholar
 too ?

But I am not like you a poet, born
 To see the unseen, and feel a pulse
 of life

Beating in brooks and rocks and sandy shores.—

You lost a friend in him who now sleeps here.

Kenneth.

I lost my hope in life.

Ina.

Nay, say not so :

We've not so many here among our hills

With the rare gift of genius, and the love

Of letters, and of all things beautiful,
That we should let them pine away for lack

Of needful culture. I am very sure
My uncle will do as my father did,
And send you still to College. How is Mairi?

Kenneth.

Mairi is gone to Doris Cattanach,
And lost to me.

Ina.

Ah! that explains your gloom;
You have fallen out, and hence your thoughts are sad.

But how should she be lost to you because

She's with her cousin?

Kenneth.

Can a maiden be
With Doris, and remain what I have dreamed?

Can the thaw come, and footsteps tread the snow,

And broad wheels grind it down, and leave it still

As when the white flakes trembled down from heaven?

Ina.

Kenneth, I fear that we are hard on Doris,

We judge a stranger by our home-bred ways,

Who, maybe, walks by other rule of right.

I blame myself at times.

Kenneth.

And so did I,

Miss Ina, when I heard that she had taken

Mairi to be with her. I said like you, Perhaps 'tis we that have not understood her,

And she has ta'en my little maid to make

A lady of her, as you take a wild-flower,

And plant it in a garden to enrich Its life and beauty. So I went to thank her.

Ina.

And found your Mairi still your pretty wild-flower,

Only with brighter hues.

Kenneth.

I found her not

At all. She is too grand to see me now;

And Doris only mocked me.

Ina.

Nay, in that

You surely are mistaken. She's a lady.

Kenneth.

And I am but a fisher lad. But you Shall judge yourself. There was a little song—

A trifle like the shilfa's short bright note—

Which I had writ for Mairi once to sing,

And loved it, for my very soul was in it.

Mairi had sung it in the great house there,

And Doris made a comic rhyme of it,
And said it over to me—very clever,
And funny, but there was no heart in it ;
Yet it was like my own—oh, very like ;
Only the soul was gone.

Ina.

Ah ! that was cruel ;
But Mairi did not know of it, be sure.

Kenneth.

Do you think so ?

Ina.

Nay, I am certain of it.
She is a girl whom neither wealth,
nor arts
Will turn from the bent of truth.

Kenneth.

Thank you for that.

Ina.

Let nothing shake your trust in her.
Be sure
Suspicion murders love, and from its
death
Come anguish and remorse.

Kenneth.

I will remember.

Ina.

And, Kenneth, when you make your-
self a name,
As I am sure you will do, for your
songs
Are like the murmur of the running
brooks,
Or like the wind that breathes upon
the woods,
And from each tree evokes a separate
note
To make the woodland harmony, and all
So simple and true that they must
touch men's hearts—
Then you will do this, Kenneth : you
will make

These fishers' homes, which you do
know so well,
Dear to the world by your recital of
The patience and the pathos of
their lives,
The tragedies enacted on the sea,
And hunger of the body and soul alike
Where bread and books are scarce.

Kenneth.

That I will, Miss ;
But you, we looked to you to help us ?

Ina.

Nay,
That is all past and gone.

Kenneth.

Why is it gone ?

Ina.

This is a man's work ; I have been
a failure ;
And made his last days lonely whom
I loved,
And did no good to any one, and now
My way of life must needs be far
from these
Grey rocks and lochs and isles.—Ah !

Enter SIR DIARMID.

Sir Diarmid.

How now, Kenneth ?
I thought you never left your books,
except
To trim the boat, and set the lines.

Kenneth.

To-day, sir,
I had to row Miss Ina to Isle-
Monach.—
Was it an hour you said, Miss ?

Sir Diarmid.

Going now ?
Well, do not trouble to bring back
the boat ;
I'll see Miss Ina home.

Kenneth.

Yes, sir.

Sir Diarmid.

Good-bye !

[*Exit KENNETH.*]

Ina, forgive me that I followed you
Into your still retreat. I saw the boat
Making the cove behind the mussel-
crag,

And could not help it. What a wealth
of beauty

Gathers around these mouldering
abbey walls,

Draped with pale lichens, and with
graceful tufts

Of small-leaved ferns, and lovingly
embraced

By the ivy, which they once upheld,
that now,

With reverence dutiful, sustains and
brightens

Their sad and tottering age. What
cunning hand

Carved these dark tombstones with
their pregnant symbols

That speak a braver faith than skulls
and cross-bones

And Time with scythe and hour-glass ?
You were right ;

Our fathers had an Art and a Religion,
A sense of beauty and a hope in God,
Nobler than ours. Do you come
often here ?

Ina.

Sometimes. Oh yes, the isle is
very lovely ;

And yet I love it more for what
it hides

Than for the grace that hides it.

Sir Diarmid.

Ah ! I know.

Forgive me. You would rather
be alone.

Ina.

Nay, it is I should beg to be forgiven :
The place is yours ; but yet it holds
my dead
Along with yours.

Sir Diarmid.

And living as well as dead,
Our races soon shall mingle once again ;
Shall they not, Ina ? It is not so long
Since the two streams were parted.

Ina.

Yes ; I know.

Sir Diarmid.

Yes ! may I take that for my answer,
then ?

Ina.

Nay, do not wrest my words. I
only meant

That we were once of the same stock,
and still,

After our kindly Highland way,
the river

Scorns not the stream that left to turn
the mill,

And grind the meal.

Sir Diarmid.

But gladly welcomes back
The mill-race to its bosom, having been
A shallow and a stony brook without it.
O Ina, you will make an empty life
Once more a flowing river full and glad.

Ina.

This is no time or place for thoughts
like these ;

I blame myself for listening, stand-
ing here

Where I should know but sorrow.

Sir Diarmid.

Why should you
Know only sorrow here or anywhere,

Who bring such joy to others ! When
 a wave,
 Broken and spent, ebbs back, what
 should it do
 But mingle with the new wave
 flowing in,
 And swell its volume ? Should not
 love for him, then,
 Whom you have lost now blend with
 other love,
 And make an undivided absolute bliss,
 To fill and glad our life ? Yet it
 is true,
 This place is all too sombre ; let
 us hence,
 And get the sunshine round us
 as within.

Ina.

But there's no sunshine in me. I
 am truly
 A most unhappy maid ; and what
 was said
 Must be as if it never had been said.

Sir Diarmid.

You cannot mean it. Ina. What
 is wrong ?
 Do you not love me still ?

Ina.

Do I not love you ?

Sir Diarmid.

Yet you can speak thus calmly
 of unsaying
 All you have said.

Ina.

If it is best for you :—

I cannot cease to love you while I live ;
 Yet I can live, and have no hope
 in love.

Sir Diarmid.

If it is best for me ! But it's not best ;
 It is the worst and bitterest could
 befall me.

What is it, Ina ? Something troubles
 you.

You used to be a leal, true-hearted girl,
 And frank and brave and not fantastical.
 Have I done aught to vex you ?

Ina.

No, indeed ;

You have not changed to me nor
 I to you ;

I never trusted you as now I do ;
 Nor felt before how desolate life will be
 Without you. Yet I came here now
 to make,

Over his grave, a vow that we must part,
 Which well may be the breaking of
 one heart.

Sir Diarmid.

Nay, but of two hearts if it come
 to that.
 Yet why should any hearts be broken,
 Ina ?

Ina.

Listen : we had not told him of
 our Love—

Sir Diarmid.

It was his sudden illness, not my will
 That kept me silent.

Ina.

Yes, indeed, I know :

But when he lay a-dying, I be-
 thought me,
 Not witting that the end could be
 so near,

That it might comfort him to know
 our bliss ;—

And it is bliss, whatever come of it.
 But oh, instead of comforting, it made
 A stormy bar across the river-mouth
 Of life to him, and trouble and alarm.

Sir Diarmid.

But why ?

Ina.

He muttered, meaning to explain,
Something—but it was half-articulate—
And all I heard was “Doris.”

Sir Diarmid.

Doris, said you?
Well, now my heart is light again, and I
Could laugh like children at a pantomime.
Why, how could Doris come between
us two?

Ina.

I cannot tell; only he named her name.

Sir Diarmid.

But what has Doris Cattanach to do
With us, and with our love? And do
you mean,
Ina, that you could give me up to her?

Ina.

That would be hard.

Sir Diarmid.

I'd sooner mate me with
A cloud, cram-full of lightning, hail,
and thunder,
Or wed a polar bear, and sail away
Upon an iceberg. Think no more
of this:
Perhaps he did not hear you right,
or else
The mind was wandering, as it
often does
On the dim verge of life.

Ina.

Nay, he said plainly,
“It must not be; you must not
love him.”

Sir Diarmid.

Well;
But that's past helping, Ina.

Ina.

Yes, I know.
But yet his broken words left this
whole thought

Clear in my mind, it would work harm
to you,
And that through Doris somehow.
I am sure
That was his meaning.

Sir Diarmid.

Well, it is a riddle
That puzzles me to solve. Shall we
then shape
Our lives by their hard puzzles?

Ina.

No, indeed;
But yet it would be selfish if I shrank
From a plain duty for the pain it costs,
Or clung to that which would bring
hurt to you.

Sir Diarmid.

But what would hurt me most were
losing you.

Ina.

Ah, life is very hard.

Sir Diarmid.

Nay, life with love
Is just the very best thing that I know.
Now think no more of this.

Ina.

If I were only
More worthy of you!

Sir Diarmid.

Let me judge of that:
You rate yourself too humbly: it is I
Should have my doubts of being meet
for you;
And yet I think Fate meant us for
each other.

Ina.

But if I were to be a burden to you.

Sir Diarmid.

I want that very burden, cannot rise
Without it to the heights where I
would soar,

More than the kite without its loaded
tail.

Come, Ina, cast these fears away, and
speak,

As on that happiest day of life to me
When first our lips were framed to tell
our love,

And you did paint for us a restful
home

Amid a busy life, like this old house,
What time the monks lived in it, and
the folk

Learnt of them letters, arts, and piety.
You have a dainty fancy, and it made
A pretty picture.

Ina.

But it was not fancy.

O Diarmid, you may do a great work
here

Where work is greatly needed.

Sir Diarmid.

Could I take

To work as much as sport, and had
your help,
Perhaps I might.

Ina.

Nay, do not think of me ;

You need no help but what their love
provides.

The people live in memories of the
past,

And all their happiest memories cluster
round

Those of your name and you. They
may be stiff

To men of alien blood, at times even
false ;

But you have but to say, and they
will do,

For all their hearts are yours. Oh, if
you knew them,

And their pathetic faithfulness of love,
Rooted in ages past.

Sir Diarmid.

There, now ; 'tis good

To hear you speaking once more like
yourself,

A Highland maiden for her clan and
Chief.

I love the people, and at first, I think,
I loved you for the love you bore
to them.

But yet the task is hard.

Ina.

That I know well,

For I have failed. And yet the
hindrances

To good and noble action mostly lie
In our own bosoms.

Sir Diarmid.

May be. But the clergy,

They hold the place which once the
Chieftain held,

And what have they made of it ?

Ina.

They have made

A patient, orderly, and pious people,
According to their light. But they
have not

The place of eminence and influence,
Which love has kept for you. Besides,
our age,

The more its spirit is religious, cleaves
The more to secular forms, and will
not take

Its shape from priests.

Sir Diarmid.

But you will help me, Ina ?

Will be my inspiration if I try it ?

Ina.

What other inspiration can you need
Than to redress old wrongs, and help
the growth

Of civil polity, and self-control,

And homes made glad by fruitful
industry,
And to be compassed round by all
men's love?

Sir Diarmid.

There; every word you say but shows
me more
How much I need you. I am not
a hero;
Only a Highland laird, as indolent
As all men are whose life is passed
in sport.

Ina.

And I but a weak woman; I can do
So little. And their life is an old
growth
Of time—a heritage of history,
Not shaped by their intention, nor
to be
Fashioned, at once, by our new modes
of thinking.

Sir Diarmid.

Now, say not you are weak. There's
nought so strong
As a clear-sighted woman. You shall
even
Do with me as you will, when I
may hold
This little hand in mine, and call it
mine.

Ina.

O Diarmid, are we right? My father's
words—
His last words, mind—

Sir Diarmid.

Were something about Doris:
And would you give me up to her?

Ina.

No truly.

[*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS.

What has come over the sunshine?
It is like a dream of bliss.

What has come over the pine-woods?
Was ever a day like this?
O white-throat swallow, flicking
The loch with long wing-tips,
Hear you the low sweet laughter
Comes rippling from its lips?

What has come over the waters?
What has come over the trees?
Never were rills and fountains
So merrily voiced as these.
O throstle softly piping
High on the topmost bough,
I hear a new song singing,
Is it my heart, or thou?

ACT II.—SCENE I.

CHORUS.

Fond of shooting, fishing, hunting,
Sound of bagpipe, drum, or fife,
Yacht and sail and flying bunting—
All the ways of savage life;
Sick of clubs and jolly fellows,
Play and pantomime and clown,
Novels bound in blues and yellows—
All the idle ways of town;
Tired of all the strife of Parties,
Solemn dinners, routs, and drums,
Public meetings where no heart is,
And a chairman haws and hums;
What shall youth do when the river
Has no pools where salmon lie,
And the sun is shining ever,
And the trouting streams are dry,
And the grouse-cock gaily crowing
Fears not either dog or gun,
And the partridge broods are growing,
While the corn grows in the sun?
Weary he of fly and feather,
Weapon shining on the shelf,
Weary of unchanging weather,
Weary maybe of himself;
For he was not meant for daily
Bringing basket full, or bag,

Shooting grouse or capercailzie,
 Stalking of the timid stag.
 What shall he do, weary-laden,
 If in such a vacant hour
 He shall happen on a maiden
 Lovely as a sweet wild-flower,
 With a noble nature truly,
 Pointing him to noble deeds,
 Plucking up the thoughts unruly
 Growing in his mind like weeds,
 Opening to his soul a grander
 Life than he has lived before,
 As among the hills they wander,
 Or beside the grey sea-shore?
 Ah! the passion, all-constraining,
 That now lifts his heart above
 Vacant mood and vain complaining,
 Lapt in bliss of early love!

SCENE—*Kildrostan.* SIR DIARMID and LADY
 MACALPINE.

Sir Diarmid (singing).

“To Norrøway, to Norrøway,
 To Norrøway owre the faem.”

Lady MacAlpine.

Why do you sing that ballad? My
 old heart
 Goes pit-a-pat to hear it; like the merle
 That sees a gled o’erhead. Surely
 you are not
 Tired of me yet.

Sir Diarmid.

Nay, mother, not of you;—
 You’re always pleasant company—but
 somewhat

A-weary of the weather which is bad,
 Being so good, and of myself a little,
 And of the world in general.

Lady MacAlpine.

Don’t be silly.

Sir Diarmid.

I think I never was more sensible,
 But to be sensible is to be dull;

All sensible folk are tiresome. Have
 you heard
 That ever any of our ancestors
 Mingled their blue blood with a gipsy
 witch’s?

Lady MacAlpine.

What do you mean, boy?

Sir Diarmid.

Only this, that I
 Am rather of their roving disposition,
 And with the first crisp bursting of
 the leaf,
 Or even while buds are only reddening
 yet
 On the bare boughs, and primrose banks
 are bare,
 Begin to feel a stirring in my veins,
 As if I must be off into the woods,
 And hang a kettle on a tripod o’er
 A fire of sticks, and steal my own
 young hares.

Yet here is half the summer past, and
 still

I’m at the chimney nook. Had I
 not been

A baronet, I should have been a
 poacher

In shabby velveteen, and had a lurcher
 Close at my heels, and half my days
 in jail,

And half i’ the moors and woods. I
 wonder we

Can hate them so, they are so like
 ourselves.

Lady MacAlpine.

Don’t talk so idly, you do let your
 tongue

Run off with what small sense you have.

Sir Diarmid.

But how
 About that gipsy, mother? I am sure
 There must have been one in our
 family tree.

Was she dropt from it as a rotten
branch,
Or christened Lady Margaret Mer-
rilees,
Or Honourable Gertrude Jenny Faa
Of Hedgerow Elms, in Thieveshire?

Lady MacAlpine.

Hold your peace.
Your ancestors were noble and high-
born,
And mated with the best blood of
the land.

Sir Diarmid.

Well, mother, do not frown at me; I do
But jest, and yet it was a foolish jest,
The birth of vacant brains. Having
nought to do,
I've seen you bring old rubbish from
your drawers—
Scraps of brown lace, housewives, and
baby linen,
Buttons, old dingy letters, battered
thimbles—
And litter all the room with them;
and I
Being idle, throw the rubbish of my
mind
About me too, and sorry stuff it is.

Lady MacAlpine.

Well, well; you might find matter for
your jests
Fitter than those to whom you owe
your being.
But now you'll stay at home. 'Tis
weary waiting
Alone in my old age.

Sir Diarmid.

Old age! why, you
Are younger in my eyes, and handsomer
Than half the girls I meet. My little
mother,
You never can grow old, your heart's
so young,

While they are old i' their teens.
Yet I must go,
Only I would not leave you quite
alone.

Lady MacAlpine.

But wherefore must you go?

Sir Diarmid.

A promise, mother;
Far rather would I be at home with
you.
And after this I mean to spend my days
In sheer respectability, and go
Duly to church, and play the justice
too,
And lecture rogues and vagabonds,
and sit
On Boards, and manage every one's
affairs,
Like a true Chief. But there's a
College friend
Who worships Thor and Odin, when
he tires
Of Zeus and Aphrodite and Apollo;
And I had promised he should see
the land
Of Vikings and Berserkers, and the
Fiords
From which their galleys oared to seek
adventures.
So now he writes me he is coming
here
To-day, and I must get the old yawl
in trim,
And see if she will float to Norrøway.

Lady MacAlpine.

A friend who worships Odin! Why,
the man
Must be a pagan.

Sir Diarmid.

Well; he rather is
A something of a pagan and a poet,
Yet no bad fellow, either, in his way.
He will not sacrifice the sheep, or kids,

Or horses ; being æsthetic, he will be
Content with fruits and flowers and
wine libations.

Lady MacAlpine.

What do you mean? Is that what
young men learn
At College now?

Sir Diarmid.

Yes ; some of them prefer
Boating or boxing, cricketing or
hunting,
Lawn-tennis, or to drive a four-in-
hand ;
But the more studious mostly spend
their terms
Seeking for a religion.

Lady MacAlpine.

Now you jest ;

I know it by your look :—As if
young men
Could leave their parents' homes with-
out religion !
Why let this mocking fiend ironical
Cover your better thought?

Sir Diarmid.

I do not mock.

It may be that they bring up from
their homes
Their cradle-faiths, but they are stript
quite bare
Ere many months pass. And besides,
a man
May wish new clothes, who is not
wholly naked,
May feel he has outgrown his baby
robes,
May be ashamed too of his rustic fit,
And fain to dress his soul in the last
fashion,
And wear it jauntily. So we are grown
To be a sort of dandies in religion,
Affecting the last mode. At present,
we

Incline to Pagan cults, but are not sure
Whether is best the Greek or the
Barbarian :

While some prefer pure Atheism to
both,
And will have neither soul, nor other
life,
Nor anything but organised dust
Which lives its day, and on the
morrow is
Moral manure enriching other lives.

Lady MacAlpine.

Diarmid, you have not lost your faith?

Sir Diarmid.

Well, no ;

I have not found a better than my
mother
Sung o'er my cradle.

Lady MacAlpine.

That is well. Pray heaven
You hold to that. I hear such dread-
ful things
About our young men now ; and even
the girls
Chatter half-atheism with as brisk an
air
As if it were new ribbons they dis-
cussed.
There's Ina Lorne reads books would
make my hair
To stand on end.

Sir Diarmid.

No fear of Ina, mother ;
Her heart's all right. And that re-
minds me now,
It was of her I meant to speak. She is
Alone in that dull house, and for a
while
You too will be alone : why should
you not
Have her with you to cheer your
solitude?

We are her kinsfolk, and I've heard
you say
She makes a good day in a drizzling
rain.

Lady MacAlpine.

She sees no visitors, keeps her room,
and claims
The privilege of sorrow to be rude.

Sir Diarmid.

Nay, mother, rude she cannot be,
and least
Of all to you.

Lady MacAlpine.

Well, no : but what means this—
This new-born care for cousins who
would scarce
Count kin save in the Highlands?
You're not wont
To speak so warmly of them.

Sir Diarmid.

That is true;
For some are bores, and some are
gossips born,
And some are butterflies, and some
are wasps,
And some are geese. But Ina's not
like them.

Lady MacAlpine.

No; but she's somewhat flighty, is
she not?

Sir Diarmid.

How mean you?

Lady MacAlpine.

Well, she always has some new
Enthusiasm—some pet scheme or other,
To remedy the lot of our poor folk,
Which yet is ne'er the better for it.

Sir Diarmid.

Yes!
Maybe; and yet one likes her all
the more;
For if it be a fault, at least it's not

A common fault among our High-
landers.
We're not enthusiasts for the people's
rights;
More shame to us that she is so alone!

Lady MacAlpine.

But, Diarmid, what will Doris say
to it?
They have not taken kindly to each
other.

Sir Diarmid.

Why, what has she to do with it?

Lady MacAlpine.

She'll think
It is her place to keep me company,
And will resent to see another here.

Sir Diarmid.

Why should it be her place? and why
should she
Resent your choice of Ina? And
indeed
That girl is too much with you.

Lady MacAlpine.

But the time
Draws near; and you must first
arrange with her
Before you go.

Sir Diarmid.

What time? what do you mean?
What is there to arrange with her?
Oh yes!

About her shootings—I will see to
that.

Lady MacAlpine.

Her shootings! nonsense: 'tis about
herself.

Sir Diarmid.

Now, mother, you are many fathoms
deeper
Than my line goes.

Lady MacAlpine.

Did not your father tell you,
As he lay dying, how things stood
between
Doris and you?

Sir Diarmid.

Well; he was very fain
That I should wed her some day, and
I promised—
For that I saw his heart was set on it—
That I would try to love her if I
could,
And wed her if I loved her, which I
cannot.

Lady MacAlpine.

And was that all? was there no
sterner hint
Of hard necessity?

Sir Diarmid.

There was no more.

Lady MacAlpine.

Oh this is cruel, laying it on me
To blur a father's memory. But you
promised
To love her, and you'll keep your
promise.

Sir Diarmid.

What
Troubles you, mother? You are
strangely moved.
I said that I would love her if I could,
And I tried hard, but she would never
let me.
Even as a girl she always spited me,
Threw stones into the pool where I
was angling,
Tore down the nests I watched with
tender care,
And rode my pony till she foundered
him,—
Cruel as well as spiteful.

Lady MacAlpine.

A spoilt child
With that hot Indian blood in her,
untamed;
But unripe fruit is bitter oft i' the
mouth,
Yet mellows with the months.

Sir Diarmid.

But has she mellowed?
I could not bear to leave you here
with her;
And Ina too so lonely.

Lady MacAlpine.

Never fear;
We shall do nicely. And for Ina, when
You make your nest here in the old
family tree,
'Twere well to feather it softly, not
to plant
A thorn there for your mate.

Sir Diarmid.

But Ina's not
A thorn. She's never sharp, and
never stings
Like Doris.

Lady MacAlpine.

Dear, I do not understand
Why you should harp on Ina. Let
her be.
Her uncle's house, of course, will be
her home;
He's rich and solitary. If you have
nothing
Against poor Doris but her childish
freaks,
Would you for them neglect your
dying father's
So earnest wish?

Sir Diarmid.

Nay, not for them alone.
Mother, no man, that is a man, would
care

To catalogue a lady's blemishes ;
 To say, I cannot love her for her pride,
 Yet love her less in her humility ;
 When she is bitter, I cannot abide her,
 And yet I loathe her more, when she
 is sweet.

Ask me no more ; indeed, I tried
 and failed :

Besides, I cannot offer to a market
 That does not want my wares.

Lady MacAlpine.

There I am sure
 You are mistaken, for she likes you,
 Diarmid.

Sir Diarmid.

Then 'tis a liking that I do not like,
 And never shall. Were Doris the
 one Eve

In all the world, I'd rather, for my share,
 The thorns and briars outside, and
 leave her Eden

All to herself, than company with her.
 Have I not seen you frown, with
 mingled shame

And anger, at her reckless speech ?
 for still

Her thoughts go naked, and are not
 ashamed ;

Yet not from innocence. You love
 her not,

And would not like, I think, to sit
 on nettles

What time my wife opened her mouth
 to speak.

Lady MacAlpine.

I know she has her faults—so have
 we all :

But you might help to mend them.
 And oh, Diarmid,

It must be.

Sir Diarmid.

What must be ? And also why
 Must it so be ? You speak in riddles
 to me.

Lady MacAlpine.

Diarmid, you love your father's
 memory ;

Would you not rather suffer any loss
 Than part with that ?

Sir Diarmid.

Indeed I would. But who
 Can take from me the picture of his
 goodness,

Hung in the inmost chamber of my
 heart,

As men set up a holy altar-piece
 For worship. That he was mistaken
 about

This girl, harms not his memory to me.

Lady MacAlpine.

Ah me ! I wot not what to do.
 This task

Should never have been left to me. I
 tell you

You have no choice but marry Doris
 now.

Sir Diarmid.

I have no choice, for I have made
 my choice,

And would not have her, mother, if
 she brought

A kingdom for her dower.

Lady MacAlpine.

Nay, hear me ; let
 Me tell the sorry tale. Your father,
 Diarmid,—

'Tis hard to unveil the faults of those
 we love,

When death has hallowed love—in
 his hot youth

Had wasted his estate with cards and
 dice ;

But when he won my hand, which
 brought much wealth,

He promised ne'er to gamble while
 he lived.

Happy our life was while he kept
his word !

Nor did he break the letter of it ever,
Only the spirit, cheating conscience so
With words depleted of their natural
sense.

Then came this Malcolm Cattanaeh
from India,

A widower, with one child, and very
rich :

He had been born a crofter in Glenara,
Was a contractor and a money-lender,
And there were strange things whis-
pered about him—

I know not with what truth, of course,
but men

Were shy of him who had been in
the East,

As many here had been.—But 'tis
too much ;

I cannot go on with it.

Sir Diarmid.

Quite right, mother ;

Let Doris and her dubious father drop
Out of your mind ; they only give
you pain.

Lady MacAlpine.

Would that were possible ! I must
tell you all,

Howe'er it wring my heart. He
settled near us

In the next glen, and lived a sumptu-
ous life,

Costly, luxurious, though his ways
were coarse,

And with a splendour of colour, hardly
fitting

The sober grey of our dim Highland
glens.

Your father took to him, although he
laughed

At the peach-coloured liveries ; praised
his talent,

Quoted his sayings ; hankered to be rich,

And live like him ; and they were
closeted

Often for hours together. Until then
He never had a secret thought from me ;
But now he kept me in the dark,
and that

Wounded and wronged my love. It
soon appeared

This clever, scheming man had led
him on—

Who knew no more than I—to speculate
In foreign loans, and mines, and for
the rise

And fall of markets ; and he, all
unskilled

To watch the turns o' the tide, bought
in too soon,

And sold too late, and gambled all away.
Ah me ! the weary days ! the anxious
looks !

The fretful temper ! and the settled
gloom,

With the fell crash at last !

Sir Diarmid.

But why recall

This story now, since, after all, we
have

Enough for all our wants ? What
need to cry

O'er our spilt milk, when all our pails
are full,

And the cow yields as ever ?

Lady MacAlpine.

Wait a bit ;

One day he told me that my all was
gone,

And I, like you, said lightly, Never
mind ;

We have the old home still, and our
old love,

Which none can rob us of. But
therewithal,

He only looked the gloomier, and
cursed

Himself, his friend, and all the ravenous crew

Of jobbers and promoters. Then I said,

Now, let us have no secrets; that has been

The worst of all our losses, the decay
Of that full trust that made us one indeed.

Perhaps a woman's wit may find a way
To mend things, or to bear them. I was sore

At his concealment, sorer than I said,
For empty heart is worse than empty purse,

And mine had been made vacant by neglect.

But when I found that Malcolm Cattanach

Had led him on and on, till every acre
And every stone o' the house, and every right

Of fishing, shooting, mining, were in bond

To him for moneys lent and lost, my heart

Utterly failed me.

Sir Diarmid.

Are we beggars, then,
On Doris' charity?

Lady MacAlpine.

Scarcely yet. I have
My jointure, and I got a legacy
After your father's death. Not otherwise
Could you have gone to College.

Sir Diarmid.

Had I known this,
I would not so have wasted all these years
In idleness, that might have yielded fruit
For wintry days.

Lady MacAlpine.

I thought your father told you.
But that's not all. There is another bond,

That if you claim her hand ere you have passed

Your four and twenty years, then she and all

Her gathered wealth are yours.

Sir Diarmid.

How, if I fail?

Lady MacAlpine.

That will be very ruin.

Sir Diarmid.

One word more.

What, if I ask, and she refuse my hand?

Lady MacAlpine.

To punish her, he gives you back the land.

But she will not refuse.

Sir Diarmid.

I daresay not.

'Tis a hard case. Has Doris known all this?

Lady MacAlpine.

Yes, years ago.

Sir Diarmid.

Ah! that accounts for much.

I must have time to think.

Lady MacAlpine.

There is your friend
Just driven to the door; a handsome youth,

But yet a bit effeminate. I'll see him
At dinner time.

Sir Diarmid.

It is unfortunate
His coming at this moment. But I must
Be civil, though my head is in a whirl.

[*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS.

Vain for a man to think that he
 Can hide what a woman is fain to know!
 Vain to dream that she does not see,
 Because her seeing she does not show!
 He cannot lie with a guileless look
 Of innocence pure that falters not,
 And she will read like a printed book
 The riddle of his most secret thought.
 Well she saw where his love was given,
 Saw that her tidings had quenched his
 light,
 Saw that he grasped, as if for heaven,
 A hope that would leave him in sorry
 plight.
 And oh that Ina might be her daughter!
 Oh the dread of his fated wife!
 Oh the hopes that were writ on water!
 Oh her boy, and his shipwrecked life!

ACT II.—SCENE II.

CHORUS.

Ah! what to do, if one should get
 A tawny lion for a pet!
 Or some volcano as a boon
 To play its fireworks like a tune!
 O terror of his playful moods!
 O horror of its lava floods!
 So troubled and amazed were they,
 So feared what he might do or say,
 That youth fantastical whose wit
 With the old Pagan cult was smit,
 And stormed, in words that swing and
 swell,
 Like changeful peal of tripping bell,
 Against the love that is divine,
 And for the love inflamed with wine.
 Daily their simple souls were shocked
 With fleeing scornful words that
 mocked
 At Faith and Unfaith, nothing loth,
 At God and Science, lightlying both;
 But what the shallow heart believed
 Of all it praised, and all it grieved,

Although he did his rating well,
 'Twould need a wiser man to tell.
 Still Zeus to him was Great and
 Mighty,
 Still reigned the foam-born Aphrodite,
 Still bright Apollo's arrows flew,
 Still Dian brushed the evening dew,
 Still Naiads haunted fount and brook,
 And life was like a fairy-book:
 Or Odin stern came back again,
 And Thor, and noble Balder slain
 By Loke's dark counsel, and the Tree.
 Great Ygdrassil, of Mystery,
 And all the Myths of ancient Night,
 Myths of the dawn and growing light,
 Myths of the earth, the cloud, the star,
 And life and its eternal war.

SCENE—*Kildrostan Park.* SIR DIARMID
 and TREMAIN.

Sir Diarmid.

So we give up our cruise, then, after all?
 'Tis well; for, as it happens, it would
 scarce
 Have suited me to go. You'll not
 regret it?

Tremain.

Why should I? 'Twas a sudden
 fancy struck me,
 And just as sudden left.

Sir Diarmid.

No other reason?

Tremain.

What other would you have? Must
 one have reasons
 To knock down fancies with—a club
 to beat
 The vapour off, that passes with a puff?
 I choose to have my whims, and let
 them go
 E'en as I list. It is a folly, man,
 A superstition of these modern times,
 To be in bonds to reason.

Sir Diarmid.

As you like.

But there's a nice breeze tripping on
the loch,
Tipping the waves with foam. Have
you no fancy
To ride the white steeds in a merry
gale?

Tremain.

Nay, that's all past. I hate a
boisterous life.
Give me the calm of Tempe, where
no wind
Blows on the vine-stocks roughly, and
where love
Pants in the sunshine dreamily among
The lotus leaves and asphodels.

Sir Diarmid.

What then?

Are all those pictures of the bounding
sea,
And billowy roll of life there, and
your skill
With sail and rope and rudder in a
storm,
But so much moonshine?

Tremain.

Moonshine! surely no;

But poetry of course. O you dull
fellows,
Tied down to facts, you lose the half
of life,
Missing its fancied part. I sit and
dream
Of lying in a pinnace with my love,
On a pard's skin, or carpet Eastern-
dyed
Of gorgeous colours, with a cloudless
sun
Inflaming every sense, as we look
down,
And watch the pulsing globe, and
tangled arms
Of myriad Medusæ. Then I see

Ideal storms loom darkly, and the waves
Lashed into madness, which I master so
That by the sense of power we relish
more

The soft delights of love. But your
wet ropes,
And clumsy oars—faugh! they give
blisters first,
And then a horny hand; and life is lost,
By so much, when you lose a perfect
sense.

'Tis needful for my Art that I should
have

Nice touch and taste and smell and
sight and hearing,

That through all gates may fine
sensations pass

Into my being, and enrich my life.

Sir Diarmid.

Tush! man; you are not so effeminate
As you affect.

Tremain.

I never handled rope,
Nor held a tiller, nor yet mean to do:
A harp, even, blunts the finger-tips.

You think

To be effeminate is to be weak:

I hold that manhood only then is
perfect,

When it has all a woman's delicate sense,
And absolute refinement, and will
answer,

Like the wind-harp, in tremulous
response

To every breath of fancy.

Sir Diarmid.

How then shall you

Employ your holiday? Our ways
are rough,

Nor do we fear to blunt a sense by use.

Tremain.

If I might just go on as now we do,
Bound to no method, held to no
set plans,

Floating as fancy wills, or Fate decrees!
Those hills are beautiful in the
purple lights
Of evening, glassed upon the quiet
loch;

And weird-like are the wavering
morning mists,
Tinted with rainbow fragments, like
the glories

Which hover in the cloudland of old
times;

And pleasant is the swaying of the boat,
And lapping of the waters; and I
think

I could write something smacking of
the life

Of the young world, while yet the
gods were in it,

As I look round and see the fisher-
women

Wade through the surf i' the twilight
to the boats,

Each with her husband, or her sweet-
heart, maybe,

Borne pick-a-back.

Sir Diarmid.

A barbarous custom! I

Have tried to shame the men out of
these ways,

And do not wonder that you mock
at them.

Tremain.

I do not mock at them. I never felt
More tenderly to any ancient relic
Than to this fond survival. Let it be.
Why drive your modern ploughshare
over all

The ways of primitive custom, making
them

As flat and commonplace as turnipfields.
Let it alone. It is the antique symbol

Of women's loyalty to love—a link
Uniting us with a more touching life

Of loyal service. Had I but such
a Naiad—

Only not quite so freckled and
uncombed—

To plash her large limbs in the waves
for me!

Sir Diarmid.

Never was such a plea for barbarism
Pleaded before.

Tremain.

And yet as good a one

As you shall find for worshipping
a maid,

Until she is a wife to worship you.

Why is it barbarous? Was the Greek
a savage,

When the fair princess, with her
laughing maidens,

Washed the white linens in the
sparkling brook,

And lovers lay upon the grass, and
noted

The dainty feet that splashed the
shining spray?

Sir Diarmid.

Well, you may well play the lawyer
for the nonce,

And draw me out, from murky heathen
times,

Precedents of authority to bar

The way of progress. But you'll not
persuade me

The custom's not degrading.

Tremain.

Ay, in vain

We hope to master prejudice by
reason.—

But how about this Doris you should
wed,

And will not, though her acres are
so handy?

What ails you at her?

Sir Diarmid.

This; she loves me not,

As shrewdly I suspect; nor love I her,

As certainly I know. And when
we speak
Of marriage, that's a point at least.

Tremain.

I know not ;
I'm not a marrying man, though all
my life
Is love and poetry, which mostly lose
Their glory at the touch o' th'
wedding ring.
It is a quakerish thing connubial bliss,
Tame and slow-blooded, dressed in
browns and greys,
And with no flash of passion in the eye,
Or flush o' the cheek. Is she not
beautiful ?

Sir Diarmid.

Truly ; yet with a dangerous kind
of beauty,
Beauty as of a panther or a snake,
Lustrous and lithe ; or so at least
she shows
To me who love her not. Her
father wedded
In the far East a Hindoo girl, and so
The daughter is not, like our High-
land maids,
Ruddy and large with amber in
their hair,
But slight and supple, and the sun
has dyed
Her cheek with olive. Yet she is
most fair.

Tremain.

Ah ! now you interest me. 'Tis just
the kind
Of beauty that I worship. Helena's
Was dangerous, and the grand
Egyptian Queen's
Who conquered the world's con-
querors, and the sun
Had softly dusk'd the snow of cheek
and bosom,
That chills our northern women.
There's no joy

Without the sense of danger ; there-
fore men
Climb the precipitous mountains with
a feeling
Of tingling, perilous gladness : and I hate
Your meek and milky girls that dare
not kiss
A burning passion, clinging to your lips.

Sir Diarmid.

Doris is not a Cleopatra, nor
Helen of Troy—she's just a Highland
lady
Touched with an Eastern strain. You
must not liken her
To your wild-eyed Aspasias.

Tremain.

But you said
Hers was a dangerous beauty, like
the serpent's,
And that is what I like above all things.
Serpents twine round you, clasp you
in their folds,
And charm you with a gaze that does
not flinch ;
Firing you as the many-husbanded
Helen was wont to do, till men
would lose
The world for one brief rapture of
her kiss.

Sir Diarmid.

I spoke too loosely : you misconstrue
me,
So fancying her.

Tremain.

There's nothing else against her,
Except that dangerous beauty, which
is only
The prejudice of people commonplace.
I like to play with adders. I had one
I loved once as you love your dog,
and had
Subtler communion with it, richer
thoughts

From its uprearings, and its wondrous
eyes
Than you shall get from any noisy
hound
With its rough shows of liking.

Sir Diarmid.

Well, I'd rather

My dog should jump on me, and
wheel about
Barking for joy, than have an adder
twine
Slow folds about me. But tastes differ.

Tremain.

Ay,

They differ; yet there is a worse
and better,
For taste is the true test of character:
The crown of culture is a perfect taste,
Which lacking, men are blind and
cannot see
The higher wisdom. 'Tis the want
of it
That floods the world with stale
stupidities,
And hangs a vulgar arras round the
mind
Of misbegotten fallacies. Tastes differ!
And so do faiths and policies, but yet
Their differences are not indifferent.

Sir Diarmid.

You need not rave about it, man. I
used
A common phrase, as one does
current coin,
Not caring to ring copper half-pennies
Upon the counter.

Tremain.

Oh, yet I take leave

To doubt the taste that shrinks from
such a girl
As you describe your Doris: that is all.
The kind of woman, bred of Christian
cult,

Whom you call womanly, to me is
watery—

A ghost, a mist that chills you with
its touch.

How changed from the grand creature
Nature made

For joy, and music, and the giddy dance,
And glorious passion! There's a
story of

Pelagia, leader of the mimes at Antioch
On the Orontes; how she came one day
Up from the silvern baths with her
fair troop

Of girls, all glowing with the flush
of life,

And bounding with light mirth, and
lures of love,

Like the young hinds, what time the
year reveals

The antlered stag freed from the down
of his horns;

And as she came, arrayed in purple skirt
Of Tyrian, golden bracelets on her
wrists,

And tinkling anklets, and the flash
of gems

Upon her bosom, on her brow of
flowers—

Lo! then an anchorite, dried up, and
baked

With dirt of some dim cave where he
had burrowed

With bats and owls, looked wistfully
on her,

And craftily assailed her with regrets
That she brought not her beauty and
her joy—

Another Magdalene!—to serve his
Lord:

Wherewith being touched, she turns a
penitent,

And comes next day, and lays aside
her robes

Of splendour, and her bright and
joyous ways

So winsome, and in squalid garb arrayed

Of sackcloth, visits graves and lazar
houses,
Pale as a lily—a shadow called a saint.
What think you now of such a work
as that
To pleasure Heaven with? While the
old gods lived
A woman was the glory of our glad
And fruitful earth. But now you
make of her—

Sir Diarmid.

I prithee, peace, man. If I did not
know
This is but spinning moonshine for
the love
Of phantasy, and framing paradox
To seem original, I could be wroth
With such trash-speaking. Interrupt
me not.
What, if your leader of the mimes
had been
A chaste pure maiden, daughter of a
home
Where mother-love enfolded her in
customs
As sweet as lavender, and that she met
Some gay apostle of the flesh, and as
His penitent, became—what you
have known?
The world is bad enough, and false
enough
Without such gloss to prove its dark-
ness light.
The devil is up to that; and does
not need
That you should make fine clothes for
him to wear
When he goes masking. Let this
stuff alone;
Or weave it into verses, if you will,
For fools to read, although I used to
think—
But that was in my youth's fond
innocence—
That poetry should stir the best in us,

And give fit utterance also to our best
In rhythmic music.

Tremain.

That was not your thought :
'Twas but an echo you and others tossed
From mouth to mouth, and thought
that you had thought.

Sir Diarmid.

Echo or living voice, the thought is true;
God gives us song to make us nobler men
And purer women.

Tremain.

Nay, for art is not
The slave of virtue, turning songs to
sermons;
But it is free, and is its own excuse,
And finds its purpose in its exercise.

Sir Diarmid.

What do you mean?

Tremain.

This. Picturing truly all
Ideals—good or evil, as you call them—
Art doth fulfil her office, but comes
short
Of her vocation when she aims at aught
But perfect form and colour and
harmony.

Sir Diarmid.

Enough: I did not count on getting
such
Art-lectures from you. Keep them
for the freshmen.

Tremain.

You make a pedant and a pedagogue
Of that which is the sovranest thing
in nature,
The freest and the gayest. Out upon
The tyranny of small moralities,
Shop-keeping ethics, Pharisee respects!
As if high Art must minister to them,
Like a fair tablemaid who must not
speak,

But let them prose and prose ! I hate
it all.

For evil and good, yea sense and
nonsense, Art,

Soaring above them in her own bright
realm,

Yet lifts them up, and blends them in
her charm

Of light and music and divinest vision.
But you are still in bonds to common-

place,
And cannot bear this yet.

Sir Diarmid.

Nor ever shall,

Nor ever wish to. One might land
in Bedlam

For less conceit of wisdom.

Tremain.

By the way,

There's one thing more I wish to
know. Last night,

Or rather in the gloaming, as you
have it,

Upon the heights, beside the waterfall
That wavers like a tremulous white veil

Of bridal lace to hide the moss-clad
rock,

I had a vision of beauty.

Sir Diarmid.

Oh, belike

The purple glow was on the hills.

Tremain.

Nay, but

A maiden passed me tall and beautiful,
Robed all in black. Her step was

like a queen's,
Pallas-Athene had no statelier mien,

Broad-browed, large-eyed, and with
the confidence

Of strength and courage in her. Who
is she ?

Sir Diarmid.

How should I know ? No matter.

Tremain.

Girls like that

Can't walk about the shore incognito :

You surely know her ; think of it again.

I did but pass some pretty compliment—

Thrown at her, to be picked up if she
chose,

Not spoken to her—an impromptu verse
That sprang up to my lips at such a

vision
Of might and beauty delicately mixed,

When she, just pausing, gave me such
a look,

As if she could have tossed me o'er
the crag

Into the pool, then leisurely swept on.
Who is she ? All the fisher folk

would say
Was, "It will be Miss Ina."

Sir Diarmid.

Ay, that was

Ever her favourite walk. Now, if
you chance

To meet her there again, best let her
pass

Without impromptu verses. You might
find

They breed unpleasant consequences.

Tremain.

But

Who is she ?

Sir Diarmid.

Well ; no matter : my kinswoman.

Her father was our pastor, lately
dead—

No more of her. When shall we visit
Doris ?

She's far more to your taste.

Tremain.

Oh, when you will.

But that dark-robed Pallas-Athene—
your

Kinswoman, said you ?

Sir Diarmid.

Surely you would not
Intrude upon the sacredness of sorrow
Like hers.

Tremain.

The parson's daughter—

Sir Diarmid.

Sir, I tell you
She shall not be molested.

Tremain.

So : I see
Why Doris' beauty is so dangerous.
Pallas-Athene, broad-browed, shining-
eyed,

That is your style, is't? [*Exit.*

Sir Diarmid.

Pshaw ! why should I care
For that fool's babble ? for a fool he is
With all his genius, which is but a trick
Of stringing words together musically.
How could I ever bring him to the
home

Of pious, pure-souled women. Yet
he'll serve

My purpose, if he only take to Doris,
And she to him—she is not over-nice.
But is it fair that I should plot and
scheme

To save myself from a detested fate
By luring her into as dark a snare ?
Nay, but I only bring these two to-
gether,

And by the mutual attraction of
Their kindred natures let them coalesce,
If so they will—and surely so they will :
Only the time is short. Yet such folk
jump

Into their loves ; and if it so befell,
My path were clear, and all should yet
be well.

CHORUS.

O cunning schemer !
O idle dreamer !

With crafty head,
And heart elate,
Spinning a thread
To baffle Fate !

Twirl the spindle ever so fast,
Let the thread be ever so fine,
Fate will rend thy web at last,
Fruitless labour surely thine.
Sore against thee are the odds
Wrestling with the immortal gods.

ACT II.—SCENE III.

CHORUS.

Once more, with a heart undivided,
And vexed by no discords of thought,
But calm in the hope she had got,
In a great peace she abided.
Not that the grief was forgot,
Or self-reproaches were ended,
But that the sorrow was blended
With love, and the bliss which it
brought.

Once more, like a dainty bird preening
Its feathers, she cared for her looks,
And pondered her favourite books,
And read with clear sense of their
meaning ;
And the fishermen, plying their hooks,
Would hear in the dusk of the gloaming
A full-throated song that was coming
From the Manse 'mong the trees and
the rooks.

Once more, from her Dante and Goethe,
She came into clachan and cot,
And still it was sunshine she brought,
Though her speech was of patience
and duty ;

For oh, but she never forgot
The grace that is due to all human,
Or the low soft voice of a woman
Perfect in feeling and thought.

SCENE—*Street: Post Office Door.* INA,
MRS. SLIT, DORIS (*in the distance*).

Mrs. Slit.

Good-bye, then, Miss Ina; and it iss a light there will be in the shop this day, because you have been in it again.

Ina.

Good-bye. You will be sure to remember the warm things for old Elspet's rheumatism.

Mrs. Slit.

Och! yes, I will remember them.

Ina.

And Dugald's snuff, and Alisthair's tea.

Mrs. Slit.

And the snuff and the tea, though it iss the porridge that iss good enough for him, and more than he deserves, for it would be the whisky that brought him to this.

Ina.

Maybe. But who of us get just what we deserve?

Mrs. Slit.

That iss true. Yes! Some get more, and some get less; some have a penny's-worth for their halfpenny, and some only a farthing's-worth for their penny; and it iss the scales of Providence that would not do for a shop, whatever. But I will mind, Miss Ina.

Ina.

That is right. But there is Sir Diarmid's yacht in the Loch. Is he going a trip anywhere?

Mrs. Slit.

Och! it iss that Poet-man that gets the letters and the printed papers every day. He will not be for leaving the

Loch, I think. They are saying he iss a great bard or Seannachie, though I never heard him sing, or even whistle, as our lad Kenneth will do.

Ina.

But Poets make songs, and other people sing them now. However, I must bid you good-bye.

Mrs. Slit.

Good-bye; but it iss Miss Doris that will be coming along the street now; and which iss more, she will be picking her steps, and sniffing as if her father would be a Chief instead of a cottar's son. Maybe you will not be caring to see her.

Ina.

Why should I not wish to see Doris? But even if I did not, I cannot help it now, for she has seen me.

Mrs. Slit.

Fare you well, Miss. And take care of that one. It will be easier dealing with Elspet's rheumatics than with her smiles, which only show her teeth.

Ina.

Good-morning, Doris. You are early astir.

Doris.

Well, this is pleasant, Ina, seeing you Abroad, and like yourself again. They told me

Your eyes were red with weeping; but they're not.

Indeed, I think they never were so bright.

That's right. What is the good of injuring

The very feature of one's face that men Chiefly admire? One ought to think of that.

Ina.

Ought one? I don't know that I did think of it.

But never mind: my eyes are all right,
Doris.

Doris.

That's plain enough to see; you look quite brilliant.

But how did you get through the time of mourning?

Is it not horrible—the blinds, the silence, The people whispering, the dismal looks?

I was so sorry for you, and I called A score of times, I'm sure.

Ina.

I'm vexed at that;

The servant only told me about once.

Doris.

Oh, twice, at least. But then I meant to come

So often, and you would not let me in; Indeed, I thought of you from morn till night,

And could not keep you from my sleeping dreams,

I was so grieved. How did you pass the time?

You don't read novels; yet they're such a help

At such a season. Why, I lay all day, And got through half of Mudie when my daddy

Dropt from his perch. I can't think how you did.

It's dreadful to be shut up with the Bible, And Pilgrim's Progress, just like prisoners

Upon the silent system.

Ina.

Well, I was not Condemned to that quite, though I might have had Worse company.

Doris.

You did not think of cards, I daresay; yet you've no idea how They get you through the evenings, when your heart Is like to break.

Ina.

No, certainly I did not.

Doris.

Well, it's a pity now; for they just give you

The kind of mild excitement which you need

When you are low—not staking much, you know,

Only what will give interest to the game. And when I called that day I meant to try them,

In case you had been very bad.

Ina.

Oh, thanks;

I daresay you meant kindly, but you do not

Quite understand me.

Doris.

Yes, indeed I do.

I hear folk say they cannot comprehend you,

But that is their stupidity, and I

Tell them I see you through and through like glass;

You are so simple.

Ina.

Oh!

Doris.

And when you shut

Your door, and would not see a visitor, I said it was a proper thing to do,

And when the proper time came you'd appear

Splendid as ever; and there you are, my dear,

A miracle of beauty. That dress, now;

You cannot think how perfect you are in it.

Where was it made? But all your dresses fit you.

Was this what smote Tremain?

Ina.

What do you mean?

Who is Tremain?

Doris.

Not know Tremain! and he. Raving about you as a heathen goddess—

Not Venus, but another quite as handsome,

And cleverer far, though I forget her name.

Why, what can Diarmid mean, that he has never

Brought him to see you?

Ina.

Oh, I am not seeing

Strangers at present.

Doris.

But he's quite a genius, And one should see them when they come one's way,

Which is not often; then he is so handsome,

And knows so many people, and is so Charmingly wicked—but you'll not like that

Of course, because you've grown up in a Manse

Where every one is bound to be good, of course.

Tremain is quite a pagan, but his gods Are all dead long ago; and he knows that,

And does not worship Zeus and Aphrodite,

As he would like to do; only he rages—

Ever so eloquent and beautiful!—

At those who overthrow their shrines and altars.

Ina.

Doris, you surely do not lend an ear To one who, for the living God, would thrall you

To these poor bodiless shadows. He must be

A shallow fool, I think; for there are some

Whose genius, like a marsh-light, flickers where

There is no footing for a man to go.

Doris.

But you know, Ina, I am only half A Christian, half a Brahmin, and a daughter

Goes with the mother mostly, and I like The folks you call poor heathens.

What he says,

Besides, is that it does not matter much About our gods, whether they are or are not,

Or what they are. The one thing that concerns us,

Is the idea of life which they call forth, And ours is now all wrong. The Church, he says,

Has consecrated grief instead of gladness,

Has cast the shadow of the cross where heaven

Poured down the laughing sunshine; even science,

That scorning miracle is full of wonders,

Potters o'er facts and numbers, and makes man

Just a machine for grinding out these facts.

But the old gods of Greece made joyous life

With song and dance and flowers and
wine and love—

Oh, you should hear him, just.

Ina.

Do you think so?

I fancy that a cross which tells of
hope

Through sorrow, is better than re-
morseless Fate

Chaining the soul to rocks and
piercing ice.

I wish folk had more pleasure in
their lives,

More flowers and sunshine, though
I'd rather not

More foxglove, hellebore, and deadly
nightshade.

What does he say of conscience?

Doris.

Conscience! Oh,

He thinks it is a blister that has made

The soul so sensitive it cannot bear

The touch that nature meant us to
enjoy.

He's very scornful of it.

Ina.

So I fancied

The trifer would despise its inspirations.

Zeus never had much conscience.

Doris.

Then he brings you

Just to the verge of shocking things,
and when

You're briding up in anger, 'tis such
fun

To watch him sailing off, as if he
had not

Seen the improper thoughts which
made you pause.

Ina.

And does Sir Diarmid like a man
like that?

I cannot think it.

Doris.

They're inseparable.

'Tis strange he has not brought him
to the Manse.

Ina.

Nay, it were stranger to have brought
him there;

Its air would not agree with him.

Doris.

Indeed,

He's quite a revelation—something
new

Entirely in these parts.

Ina.

Yes, I should hope so.

A revelation—only of the darkness,
Not of the light. I think I saw
the man

Once, and I took him for a coxcomb
truly.

Doris.

Oh, but he raves of you.

Ina.

That's likely enough:

His words are mostly ravings.

Doris.

No, indeed;

He has the daintiest fancies, beautiful,
Poetic; and he makes you gasp for
fear

Of what he may say next, which is
so nice.

Ina.

Is it? I'd rather walk where foot-
ing is sure

Than on the thin and perilous
bending ice.

But as you will: he does not interest
me.

Doris.

That's odd; I think I never met a
man

So interesting, so fresh, and so mysterious.

Don't you like mystery in a man?

Ina.

I like

Truth, Doris, first, and reverence and manhood;

And the true man is reverent to all women.

But now, adieu. I am not given to preach,

And young men, they do say, are not like us,

Though why they should not be, I do not know.

But Doris, were I you, I'd hold aloof from one who grazes improprieties,

And does not blush to make a woman blush.

Farewell.

Doris.

Where are you going, Ina dear?

Oh, to Isle-Monach? Yes! 'tis natural

You should go often there, and

Diarmid too

Visits, of course, the graves of all his fathers.

Ina.

I have been once there, Doris, since I laid

My dead in it; and if Sir Diarmid goes Often, I cannot tell.

Doris.

I fancied you

Might have met, now and then, by chance of course,

Where there is so much to attract you both—

A common feeling of your common kin.

But then he is so busy with his friend Whom he admires so warmly, dear.

Adieu.

[*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS.

Not for a moment distrustful

Was she at all of her lover;

Yet, as she listened, a shiver,

As from a cloud passing over,

Chilled her and darkened the glory,

Radiant, shining above her.

Doris she knew to be cunning,

False too, and deft in her malice,

Clever at brewing of poisons,

Secret, to drop in the chalice;

And she had masques, like a player's,

Carefully stowed in her valise.

No, no, she did not believe her—

Yet was the sting there remaining:

Oh no! her lover was noble—

And yet it was rankling and paining:

Who could abide in such friendship,

And keep from the taint of its staining?

ACT III.—SCENE I.

CHORUS.

Where the ancient sacred Ganges

Slowly eats its crumbling bank,

Where the brindled tiger ranges

Nightly through the jungle rank,

Where the hooded cobra sleepeth

Dreaming of its victim's pang,

And its deadly venom keepeth

'Neath the folded hollow fang,

In a city many-towered

Was a garden gorgeous-flowered,

And a marble-built mansion

Stood upon a terrace high,

Overlooking the expansion

Of the garden's greenery.

There the Eastern sun, combining

With the Northern snow, entwining

Subtle brain and passion hot

With the will that bendeth not,

Made a woman strongly daring,

Reckless in her self-reliance,

Wanton in her world-defiance,
Little loving, and all unsparing.

Far away now from the sacred stream,
And the land that was growing to her
like a dream,

Beneath the stars of a moon-filled night,
The lady sat in a chamber bright,
Scented with odours and flooded with
light.

A cloth of gold for her seat was spread,
A leopard's skin at her feet was laid,
A jewelled fan was in her hand,
And golden filigree in her hair;
And all about her was rich and grand,
Of ebon and ivory, carved with care,
And gorgeous feathers, and carpets rare.

Ah! the smiling sacred river
Carries death upon its wave,
And the slumbrous cobra ever
Wiles like the devouring wave,
And the brindled tiger ranges
Through the darkness for a prey—
Tiger, cobra, corpse-laden Ganges,
What do ye with a lady gay?

SCENE—*Boudoir in Cairn-Cailleach.* DORIS
and MAIRI.

Doris.

Mairi, you are a fool. If you were
quit
Of these poor kinsfolk in Glenaradale,
Think what you might be. You are
very pretty,
And lady-like, and have the trick
of dressing,
And matching colours—you might
wed a lord
Who did not know the root from
which you sprang.

Mairi.

I do not wish to wed a lord,
Miss Doris,

I do not wish to hide from whence
I came;
I am a cottar's daughter, as your father
Rose from a like beginning.

Doris.

There's no need
Reminding me of that; but, never mind,
After this week I'll hear no more of it.

Mairi.

But they will hear in heaven, where
poor folks' prayers
Do fill its courts like incense.

Doris.

Then you mean
To pray for vengeance on the friend
who tried
To lift you from the mud. Oh, but
you are
A proper saint.

Mairi.

Nay, I am not a saint,
But, Doris, we might both be
better women.

Doris.

Well, when I pray, for I am more
forgiving
Than you, I'll pray for you that you
may get
A better husband than that Kenneth
Parlane,
Who'll starve you on his rhymes
and rebuses,
Rehearsing them to clowns in alehouse
parlours,
Inspired of usquebagh,—meanwhile
his wife
Will time her poet with a tambourine.

Mairi.

You do not know him, Doris: but
no matter;
Why should we part in bitterness?
You meant

Friendly by me, although your way
of life
Cannot be mine. "The sea hides
much," they say,
And there is much that love will
hide away.

Doris.

E'en as you will. But here's another
coming;
Adieu!

Exit MAIRI. Enter TREMAIN.

Tremain.

Why, Doris, what a pretty maid
You have! But beauty still should
wait on beauty.
You need no foil; twin stars are
doubly bright.

Doris.

How have we grown so deep familiar,
Who scarce have known each other
for a week?

Tremain.

A week! I seem to have known you
all my days;
The years before, like childhood, are
a blank.
How did I live then?

Doris.

Oh, like other babies,
Getting your milk-teeth, squalling now
and then,
Making a noise with spoons, and
being petted
And spoilt by kissing women. What
of Diarmid?
Where is he?

Tremain.

Well; he's busy with affairs;
A man of acres he, and beeves
and sheep,
With tenants, gillies, keepers, and
what not?
To see to.

Doris.

Oh! He did not use to be
Quite so full-handed.

Tremain.

Then, he's not in love;
And no one cares to look on when
a game
Is played by others, after he has thrown
His own cards up.

Doris.

He palms me off on you, then,
Having no taste for such poor gear
himself,
Or else another market for his wares!
'Tis very well, Sir Poet.

Tremain.

Nay, I said not
Any rude word like that.

Doris.

Did you not tell me
He had thrown up his cards, and did
not care
To see you play his game? So you
have come
To take his cast-off, and relieve
his mind
Of its perplexity! A gracious office!
Sure, gentlemen are most accom-
modating!
And doubtless I am honoured, could I
see it,
And doubtless you are favoured, when
you think on't!
People keep poets sometimes—do they
not?—
For their own uses, as to praise their
wares
In rhyming advertisement quaintly
fancied,
Or to relieve the tedium of their
greatness.

So I have heard. But 'tis a new
vocation
To take their leavings.

Tremain.

Ha! a clever shot,
And yet a miss. How you do drop
on one,
As a lithe panther lurking in a tree,
Licking his lips, with slowly wagging
tail,
Might leap down from his branch, and
bite the nape
Of the stag's neck, while every claw
is dug
Into the quivering flanks. I like to
watch
Your eyes at such a time, at first so
sleepy
With half-closed lids, then flashing
out so fierce
With sudden lightnings. You have
the perfect art
Of deadly wounding; yet I am not hurt.

Doris.

A pachyderm, perhaps, or armadillo
Wearing his bones outside. Some
people have
An armature of vanity as tough
As the thick folds of the rhinoceros'
hide,
And wot not when they are shamed.

Tremain.

You miss the mark,
Though you aim low—or just because
you aim
So very low. I feel when I am hit
Like other men, and may be hit like
them;
But then my feet are not among the dirt
To be hurt there. So you have sped
your bolt
Wide of the mark.

Doris.

Oh yes! you are a poet,
And fly, of course. It is among the
clouds
That one must speed an arrow after you
But whether you are singing lark, or
gled,
Or mousing-owl, who knows? You
bring such strange
Reports.

Tremain.

A lark, be sure, the bird of heaven—
A lark full-throated up in the blue
heavens,
That all day singeth to his love below,
And only can be silent by her side.—
But what reports mean you?

Doris.

Something you said,
Self-satisfied, about a laggard wooer,
A gamester who threw up his cards,
and left
The play to you who gladly took his
place;
I the poor stake.

Tremain.

But not his cards I play,
Nor yet his game, whate'er it may
have been;
'Tis my own luck I try, laying my life
Upon that throw.

Doris.

Just so; he casts me over,
And then you take me up; he's done
with me,
And therefore I am fit for you. Perhaps
You like the game: I cannot say I take
The humour of it.

Tremain.

Nay, it is not so.
I said he did not love you, which is true;
He said you loved him not, which I
believed;

And so, because the way was clear
for me,
I said I loved you, which is truest of all:
And I will challenge in the tournament
Of song all poets in the land to match
My Queen of Beauty—or be hushed
for ever.

Doris.

Fine words! But that's your trade.

Tremain.

Words! If you knew
The passion burning in the heart of
them,
The sense of utter weakness in all words,
In paradox and high superlative,
To speak the thoughts that swell and
surge in me!

Listen a moment, Doris. When I came
Hither to gather pictures and sensations
Among the mountains, and beside
the sea,

And from dim caves, and from the
whish of pines,
And lingering mists, and from the
setting suns,

That I might write a book which
should entrance

A brain-fagged world, then I was
studying words

To trade on them. But having
lighted on

My Helena, my Fate, I heed no more
The hills, the lochs, the caves, the
forest trees,

Or trailing mists, or glory of the sunsets,
Or curious felicities of speech,

Or swing of rhythmic phrase, or
anything

But just to love thee, and to win thy
love.

Doris.

There; that's enough; I half believe
you, though

I fear I should not even half believe.

I think you love me just a little.

Tremain.

Doris,

A little! I am all, and over all,
Within, without, in heart and brain,
afire

With a consuming passion which no sea
Could quench, but it would make its
waves to boil

Though they were ribbed with ice.

Doris.

You've studied well

The art, at least, how one should play
with hearts.

Yet if I were to prove your love with
some

More simple test than boiling seas of ice,
It would not much amaze me though
it failed.

Tremain.

Nay, put me to the proof; and if
my life—

Doris.

Pray, let your life alone; men wager
that

Most freely, when they least intend
to pay.

But if you cared to pleasure me, you
could,

And I could love the man who
pleasured me

As I would have him.

Tremain.

Only tell me how,

And if a heart's devotion, and a will
Resolved, and some small skill of nice
invention

To frame such dainty plots as poets use
To work out fates with, can accom-

plish it,
Count it already done.

Doris.

I hardly know

How I should put it. There's a girl
you know,

At least you've seen her—Ina at the
manse :

I hate her.

Tremain.

Well, then, I will hate her too.

Doris.

Nay, that is not my meaning.

Tremain.

Then I'll love her,
If that is what you will.

Doris.

Oh yes, your love,
Like a small seedling, having little root,
May readily be plucked up from the
soil,
And planted elsewhere. Let's to
something else :
No more of this. I had forgot she
is your
Pallas-Athene.

Tremain.

What, an if she be ?
Pallas-Athene is not Aphrodite,
And it is Love and Beauty I adore,
Which I find perfect here. What
would you with her ?

Doris.

She's in my way, was always in my way,
Balked me when we were children,
baffled me
In every purpose that I set my heart on,
And brought out all the worst in
me, until
He hated me, who should have loved
me best.

Tremain.

Ah ! well ; 'tis clear why you should
like her ill,
But not so clear how I can meddle.
Would you
That I should carry off a rival beauty,

And leave you a clear field to win
your lover,
Breaking my own heart with a frustrate
hope ?

That is a test of love's unselfishness
Love never claimed before.

Doris.

And does not now.
The man is nought to me, and never was
Even then before that I had met with
you
Who say you love me.

Tremain.

Yet you hint that she
Is in your way.

Doris.

Well ; what if I would be
Revenged upon the gamester who has
scorned me,
And she comes in between me and
my wrath ?
May I not spite him where he most
would feel
Cut to the quick ? But there ; no
more of this.
You'd give your life for me, of course ;
but when
I ask a trifle, you are scrupulous.
Let it alone.

Tremain.

What would you have me do ?

Doris.

Oh, nothing. I am not so poor in
friends
That I must beg of strangers.

Tremain.

Am I then
Become a stranger to you ? Say, what
would you ?
I must not hate her—that is not your
meaning ;
I must not love her—that is less your
drift ;

But she is in your way—yet not in
love's way :

How may I construe this, and do your
will ?

Am I to tie the offending Beauty, as
In Stamboul, in a sack, and sink
her deep

Some evening in the silence and
the darkness

Of the mid loch ? Or shall I go
in search

Of the lost art of Medicean poison,
And with a kerchief or a pair of gloves,
Subtly envenomed, so assail her life
That straightway she shall pine away
and die ?

These ways are out of date. Besides
they bring

Vulgar detective fellows, worse than
slot-hounds,

About one's heels.

Doris.

Prithee, have done with this :
I might have known that you would
trifle with me.

She said you were a coxcomb.

Tremain.

By the heavens,
And all the gods of Hellas, never was
A heart more seriously inclined to
serve you

Than mine is, if I only knew the way.

Doris.

May I believe you ?

Tremain.

Is there any oath
Will carry strong assurance ? I will
swear it.

Doris.

Oh yes ; and break it. Oaths of
any kind

Sit easy on the soul that easy
takes them :

There is no traitor like your ready
swearer

Clothed in the tatters of forgotten vows.

Tremain.

Nay, I will keep it. I am in your toils,
And you shall lead me like a meek,
tame creature

Whither you will.

Doris.

I fancied that a woman,
Having a lover faithful and devoted,
Had but to will, and he would find
the way,

His the invention, hers but to desire.—
I've heard indeed of men who with
fair speech

Have plied a maiden's heart, and
mischief came on't,

But hush ! there's some one coming.

Enter FACTOR.

Factor.

Good-evening, lady.
I am not marring better company ?
May I come in ?

Doris.

Yes, certainly. But what
Brings you again to-day ?

Factor.

Well, I have heard
That these Glenara folk will have
a grand
Function of their religion there next
Sabbath,
A Holy Fair, a big communion-day,
And there will be hot words, they say.

Doris.

Can't you
Prevent them ?

Factor.

That's not easy, if they come
In thousands as their custom is, and get
The drink once in their heads.

Doris.

But you can stop
Newspaper men from sending false
reports
About the country.

Factor.

Yes, yes; I can do
All the reporting they are like to get,
And more than they would wish.
But you might give me
The gillies, and authority from you
To warn them off the ground with
threats of law
If they refuse. They do not like
the Law,
Nor does the Law like them.

Doris.

By all means do
Whate'er may stop these dangerous
gatherings.

Factor.

Thanks; I will see to't. By the
way, I met
Your pretty cousin in a pretty plight.

Doris.

How mean you? She was here a
little ago,
Handsome as ever.

Factor.

Well, she's on the way now
Across the hills, and Kenneth Parlane
with her,
Dressed in the rags she wore when
she came here,
Barefoot, bareheaded, with her
snooded hair,
And the small bundle in the hand-
kerchief
That held her comb, her mother's
wedding ring,
Her Bible and Kenneth's letters, prose
and verse.

Doris.

Oh! she's a fool; and it was like
a fool
To think that I could take her from
the byre
Into the drawing-room. But let
her go.

Factor.

I have your full authority, then, to act.

Doris.

Surely. But run no risk of rioting.

Factor.

Oh! never fear.

[Exit FACTOR.]

Doris.

And now you would not mind
Walking across the hill, perhaps, on
Sunday?
You'll have rare fun, and you could
serve me too.
I have been moving some of my poor
tenants
From wretched crofts to settle by
the sea,
Where they can fish, and better their
estate,
And better, too, my rents by foresting
Their ill-tilled, scanty fields. They
do not like it,
And I would fain know what is said
and done
About it at this preaching. The
factor will
Report, of course, but your account
would be
More picturesque—perhaps a trifle
truer.

Tremain.

Certainly, I will go.

Doris.

Till then, adieu.
You will think over what I said to you?

CHORUS.

Cat-like, purring and mewling, and
 softest rubbing of fur,
 With just a pat of the claw, now and
 then, for a needed spur,
 Touching the quick of his vanity,
 making him keen to go
 Whithersoever she would, though
 whither he did not know,
 Seeming to answer love with love,
 though her heart was cool,
 And the clear-working brain was
 practising as on a fool,
 So she played with her victim, who
 thought he was playing with her,
 For there was not a heart between
 them to master or minister.
 Clever he might be, yet would she
 wind him around her thumb,
 Reason soon to be blinded, conscience
 soon to be dumb;
 For when a woman is good, she doth
 to all good inspire,
 But being evil, alas! she burns up the
 soul like fire.
 Rouse thee, man, for an effort; what
 though her speech be smooth,
 What though she smile too upon thee
 in splendour of beauty and youth,
 There is no pity in her; look at her
 hard, cold eye;
 You she will use for her tool now, and
 mock with her scorn by and by.

ACT III.—SCENE II.

CHORUS.

Our fates are linked together, high
 and low,
 Like ravelled, knotted thrums of
 various thread,
 Homespun and silk, yellow and green
 and red,
 And no one is alone, nor do we know

From what mean sources great events
 may flow:
 The tramp that lays him down among
 the straw,
 Despised, perchance shall fill your
 home with awe,
 Plague-stricken, or from him its peace
 may grow;
 The ruined peasant's cot may down-
 ward draw
 The stately hall that neighbours it.
 We are
 All members of one body, and a flaw
 Or lesion here, the perfect whole
 shall mar.
 Therefore let justice rule, and love
 inspire;
 Wise for thyself, the weal of all desire.

SCENE—*The Manse.* INA and MORAG.

Morag.

Please, Ina, may I have your leave to go
 Away for these two days?

Ina.

Yes, surely, go;

I shall do nicely.

Morag.

That is very well.

Ina.

You do not seem to think so. "Very
 well"
 Sounds e'en like very bad, so drily
 spoken.

Morag.

If you are happy, it is very well.

Ina.

Indeed I am.

Morag.

But it is sudden—yes!

Yet maybe it will last.

Ina.

Oh, never fear ;
'Twill last at any rate till you come
back.

I have my books, my music, and
to-morrow

There is the church. Of course I'll
miss you, yet

I promise to be blithe as any bird.

Morag.

Oh, very well.

Ina.

What ails you, Morag? Would you
Rather that I should sit me down
and mope?

You scolded me of late for being sad ;
Are you displeased to see me cheer-
ful now,

Blaming alike the sunshine and the
cloud?

Morag.

I see the gulls and pellocks in the loch
Busy and merry, and all the boats are out
Letting the nets down, and the wives
are watching

Upon the shore, and talking loud
with glee:

And why? Because they see the
herring come

Poppling the shining water with
their fins,

As if a shower were driving up,
although

The sky is blue and clear.

Ina.

I'm glad of that ;
The poor will now have bread ; it is
good news.

But what has that to do with us?

Morag.

They have
A reason for their happiness.

Ina.

Oh, that's it ;
You want to know the reason now
of mine.

But, Morag, girls are not so rational
As gulls and pellocks. Have you
never felt

Inexplicable sadness overcome you,
Though earth and heaven and all
around you were

Filled full of light and song? Why
should not joy too

Come whence you cannot tell, nor for
what reason,

But just that wells are springing in
your heart,

Whose waters lapse, and ripple as
they lapse?

Morag.

Yes, maybe. Only you were changed
that day

You visited Isle-Monach and his grave ;
And was it there you found the well
of gladness?

Ina.

You are too curious, prying into what
Concerns you not. Enough. There ;
you may go.

I do not ask you why you wish to go,
Or where you mean to go.

Morag.

You ought to ask, then.
A mistress should not let her servants
wander

Like hens or ducks at large.

Ina.

Nor servants let
Their mistress go her own way, with-
out giving

Full explanation. Is it not so, Morag?
But whether I am mistress here or
you—

Which may be doubtful—I can wholly
trust you.

Morag.

Ina, there was a time when you
would take
An interest in us all, and all our doings,
Our comings and our goings and
our folk,
The crofters and the cottars and
the fishers,
For they belonged to you, and you
to them,
Parts of a common life, you said.

Ina.

Ay, then

I was a fool, and thought to shape
your lives,
Who could not guide my own, like
some poor trader
Who, being bankrupt in his own estate,
Is fain to take the helm, and guide
affairs
For all his neighbours. Do you wish
to tell me
About your journey? I've no right
to ask,
Yet less right not to hear you.

Morag.

But you should

Know all your servants' doings, for it
spoils them
Unless they have authority on them;
And better a bad mistress in a house
Than let the maids go gadding as
they will.—
But for this business calling me away,
Do you not know, Miss, that to-
morrow is
The great Communion at Glenaradale,
And all the country will be there,
and half
The godly ministers of Ross and Skye?
Oh, it will be a great time.

Ina.

Well, I hope

You will enjoy it, Morag.

Morag.

No, I do not

Know that I will enjoy it. You enjoy
The bread you eat yourself, but not
the bread
That others eat, and which is not
for you:
The hungry is not happy when he sees
A sumptuous table spread, and he outside.
I do not hope to enjoy; yet I may get
Share of the crumbs that fall for dogs
to eat.

Ina.

Oh, I forgot. My father always
thought,
Morag, that you were wrong there,
keeping back
From that which yet you hungered for.

Morag.

It's likely

That he knows better now, and would
not be
So loose, if he came back again
from heaven,
As then when he came from the
lowland folk
Whose kirk is like a market, free to all.

Ina.

That suits me best; I think I dare
not go
Except where all alike are free to go.

Morag.

Well, you are free, and it would do
you good
To hear the sound of psalms among
the hills
When many thousand voices join,
and yet
'Tis like a small child's cry unto the
heavens,
Or tinkling of a little brook.

Ina.

I know;

That must be fine indeed.

Morag.

And then the preacher
Tells the glad tidings to the poor;
at first,
Just like an auction at a country fair,
Offering his ware so high that none
may bid
For that whose price is costlier than
rubies;
But in the end the treasure which
no wealth
Of man could buy is proffered with-
out money
And without price.

Ina.

That's as it ought to be:
But I shall hear the same free
gospel here
From him who soon will be our pastor.

Morag.

Him!

It's a thin gospel that you'll get from him.
I bought a pencil one day from
the packman,
And I was fain to put a fine point on it,
But ever as I cut, the lead would break,
Just when I had it nearly right; and so
I went on whittling, and it broke
and broke,
Till there was nought left but a bit
of stick,
And it was sharp enough. Belike,
yon lad
Is whittling down his faith too, like
my pencil
To make a fine point on it, till it be
Only a stump of wood. Then he
must read too
His sermons from a paper! Och!
to think
Of having music-notes for collie dogs
To bark at sheep with! But the
faithful dog
Can do without a paper. If you heard
Black Eachan of Lochbroom!

Ina.

And what of him?

Morag.

He's called "The Searcher"; he has
no fine points;
But well he knows the doubling
and deceit
Of hearts that are like foxes for
their wiles;
And does not pore upon the paper,
fearful
To lose his place, but has his eye
on you
Always, and follows up your very
thoughts
Into their holes and secret hiding-places,
And hunts you from all coverts, till
you lie
Low at his feet, and feel that you
are lost.

Ina.

I do not envy him. Why should
he drive
Folk to despair?

Morag.

He says that to despair
Is to have one foot on the thresh-
hold, truly,
And finger on the latch. 'Tis
very good
For sinners to despair a while.

Ina.

My father
Sought to bring hope and comfort
to them.

Morag.

Yes!

And there was no great work here in
his day.

Ina.

But there was some good work. At
any rate
I care not for your "Searcher."

Morag.

But when he
Has done with you, and you are
groaning, maybe,
Over your sins, then Lachlan of the
Lews—
“The Trumpet of the Gael”—will
take you up,
And like a prophet speak the word
of power,
That stirs despairing hearts. He
does not water
The gospel with book-learning; he
lets God
Speak for Himself in texts and promises,
Like the great word that said to
Lazarus,
“Come forth,” and he arose.

Ina.

If there were prophet
Could move one so! But no, it
cannot be.
’Tis vain to hope for the old faith again
That shone about our childhood.

Morag.

Do not doubt
But one of them would have a word
for you.
For after these comes Neil of Raasay,
maybe;
He has a pleasant voice, as if he played
Sweetly upon an instrument, to tell
About the golden streets, and gates of
pearl,
And walls of emerald and amethyst
And topaz, and the river and tree of life,
As if the birds of God had left its
boughs,
And come to earth to sing about their
glory.

Ina.

Why, Morag, you are grown poetical
O’er Neil of Raasay. Yet you did
not seem

To care much for him, when he came
at times
To help my father here.

Morag.

He never seemed
Himself when he came here. Your
father was
Too critical, with commentary books
That suck the marrow from the bones
of truth,
And leave them dry. And in a pibroch
you
Must have the muster first, and then
the fight,
And then the wail, and then the song
of triumph:
Nor shall you understand the several
parts
Without the others: so it is with him;
You must have Eachan first, and
Lachlan next,
And then your heart will glow to Neil
of Raasay.

Ina.

May be; and yet I think I’ll stay at
home.
I am not in the mood for strong
excitements:
You’ll tell me all about it.

Morag.

Yes, I’ll bring
A true account home of the last great
Feast
Held in Glenaradale.

Ina.

Nay, not the last.
They have been there a century at least,
And may hold on another, if there’s
faith
Still in the land, or maybe if there’s
none:
Such customs linger when the life is
gone.

Morag.

Have you not heard? The country's
ringing with it.

Ina.

Ringling with what? What is there
next to hear?

Morag.

Only that Doris has evicted all
The people from their houses, which
even now

Are empty, bare, and roofless. She
would crowd them

Upon the strip of shore already thronged
With fishers, and they mean to go away.
They have been used to tend, and
handle sheep

And cattle, and they have no skill
with boats;

And now they are just waiting for
to-morrow,

Housed on the beach, or in the birken
wood,

With breaking hearts, before they
leave the land.

Ina.

What say you? Doris root them from
the soil

Where they have grown like native
heath or bracken!

And they her kinsfolk!

Morag.

Ay, but near of kin

May be too near in place for upstart
pride.

I've heard some say we are all sprung
from apes,

And maybe that's the reason they
disgust us

More than a dog or cat. At any rate,
Glenara is a desert now for deer.

Ina.

Cruel and heartless! and yet only like
her.

Why told you not this story to me
first,

Instead of maundering on about the
preachings?

What care I for your "Searchers"
and your "Trumpets,"

And old Neil Raasay droning about
heaven

After his whisky? But these crofter
folk

In green Glenaradale—they touch my
heart.

Yes, I will go with you; I will get
ready

I' the instant: they shall know they
have one friend

Who shares their grief and wrath.

Morag.

But, Ina, think;

It is a twenty miles across the hills
Through moor and moss.

Ina.

And if it be so, think you

I could not do't like other Highland
girls

In such a cause? They fought for
Charlie once,

Misled by a belated sentiment,
And by their trust in those who should

have wisely
Led them, and only brought them

into sorrow:
But who will fight for them now?

were I only
A man, at least I'd let my voice be
heard

For their poor right of living on the
land.

Morag.

No, Ina, no; it must not be.

Ina.

What must not?

I may go to the preaching if I will,

But not to visit the oppressed and poor !
That's not it? Oh, it is the twenty
miles?

Well, I could do it, for my heart
is high,
And on the moors among the springy
turf

One does not weary as on dusty roads.
But there's no need of walking. How's
the wind?

My boat will bring us cleverly along
To Kinloch-Aradale, within a mile
Of Corrie-an-Liadh. We shall do it
nicely.

O Morag, only think of the old men
With their long memories clinging to
the soil,

And babes and mothers on that home-
less shore!

I would not bear their curses for the
wealth

Of all the world.

Morag.

They will not curse. But it
Is true, you say; the wind is fair;
the boat

Will bear us bravely to Glenaradale.

CHORUS.

Trimly speeds the dainty boat
Swinging o'er the foam-tipped billow,
Where the keen-eyed sea-mews float
Sleeping on their watery pillow,
Past the low black Cormorant's Rock,
Where they crowd in hungry numbers;
There a great grey heron woke,
Sudden, from its noon-day slumbers,
And beyond, the threshers rose
High above where the whale had
sickened,
Well could you hear their crashing
blows,
As its labouring breath was quickened:
Till rounding the red headland now,
The boat leapt out in the open sea,

With a ripple of laughter at her prow,
And a rush of bubbles upon her lea.

The wind fell low as the sun went down,
And every cloud had a golden crown,
A jewelled belt, and a crimson gown;

And every corrie, and rock, and hill,
Was veiled in pink or in purple, till
The glory was quenched in the gloam-
ing still.

It was the dusk of a sultry night
When Kinloch-Aradale rose in sight,
And on the beach there were fires
alight—

Fires alight, and to and fro
Forms among them moving slow,
And on the breeze was a wailing low.

KENNETH'S SONG.

There is no fire of the crackling boughs
On the hearth of our fathers,
There is no lowing of brown-eyed cows
On the green meadows,
Nor do the maidens whisper vows
In the still gloaming,
Glenaradale.

There is no bleating of sheep on the hill
Where the mists linger,
There is no sound of the low hand-mill
Ground by the women,
And the smith's hammer is lying still,
By the brown anvil,
Glenaradale.

Ah! we must leave thee, and go away
Far from Ben Luibh,
Far from the graves where we hoped
to lay
Our bones with our fathers,
Far from the kirk where we used
to pray
Lowly together,
Glenaradale.

We are not going for hunger of wealth,
 For the gold and silver,
 We are not going to seek for health
 On the flat prairies,
 Nor yet for lack of fruitful tilth
 On thy green pastures,
 Glenaradale.

Content with the croft and the hill
 were we,
 As all our fathers,
 Content with the fish in the lake to be
 Carefully netted,
 And garments spun of the wool from
 thee,
 O black-faced wether
 Of Glenaradale.

No father here but would give a son
 For the old country,
 And his mother the sword would have
 girded on
 To fight her battles ;
 Many's the battle that has been won
 By the brave tartans,
 Glenaradale.

But the big-horned stag and his hinds,
 we know,
 In the high corries,
 And the salmon that swirls the pool
 below
 Where the stream rushes,
 Are more than the hearts of men,
 and so
 We leave thy green valley,
 Glenaradale.

ACT III.—SCENE III.

CHORUS.

Near to the stormy loch, behind
 The ridge of the Badger's Rock,
 there lay

A broad green corrie ; and there the
 wind
 Was hardly felt on a wild March day,
 It was so girdled with hill and rock
 That rarely a storm on its stillness
 broke.
 Only the wild deer make their lair
 Among the moss and the bracken
 there,
 Or the stealthy fox, or the glede and
 kite,
 Or the blue hare and ptarmigan on the
 height.
 Slowly the mountain shadows creep
 Across the hollows, across the brook ;
 And to the right in the rugged steep
 Is a narrow gap where you can look
 Right down on the glimmering loch
 that clings
 To the roots of The Hill of a
 Hundred Springs.

But it is not the red deer that haunt
 to-day
 Corrie-an-Liadh, and crowd the brae,
 Here in groups, and there in tiers,
 Till hardly a patch of stone or heather,
 Hardly a green bracken leaf like a
 feather,
 Through the close-packed ranks of
 the throng appears.
 It is men and women, the young and
 the old,
 Some with their snowy locks, some
 their gold,
 Matron or maiden, with cap or snood,
 And stalwart sire with his strong-
 limbed brood—
 Men of Glenara with heads bowed
 low,
 Men of Loch Thorar with hearts
 aglow,
 Men of Glen Turret, Glen Shelloch,
 Glen Shiel,
 And lads from the Isles which the
 mists conceal.

Right at the mouth of that mountain
bay

There is a mound of swelling green
Whereon the golden sunbeams play,
And daisy and pansy flowers are seen,
And close beside it a trickling spring
Circled with moss and draped with ling.
There once they offered sacrifice,
Bringing their sick to the healing well,
And the kid of a goat for a ransom
price.

To the Spirit that bound and loosed
the spell.

There now a table is seemly spread
With homely linen, but clean and
white,

And a chalice and platter with wheaten
bread,

And the Book that giveth the blind
their sight;

And the sun shines down, who had
seen before

Far other rites in the days of yore.

Pastors four on the swelling mound
Sit, rapt, as if on holy ground—
One with a great black shock of hair,
One with a smiling face and fair,
One that was pale, and lean, and
young,

With a fire in his heart and a flame on
his tongue,

One the old pastor of the Gael
Driven out of the green Glenaradale,
With grey locks streaming around a
face

That beamed with a light of tender
grace.

Another group behind them lay
Stretched, careless, out on the short
hill grass;

They were not there to praise or pray,
But jest and gibe they were fain to
pass,

And kept apart from all the rest,
And not in Sabbath raiment drest;—

The factor, with gillies, and dogs,
and whips,

And the poet with heathendom on
his lips.

They came from walking to and fro
Upon the earth, as long ago

One came with the sons of God, we
know.

SCENE—*Corrie-an-Liadh. Throng of people
seated on bank: INA, MORAG, KENNETH,
and MAIRI in front of FACTOR, TREMAIN,
and others behind the Ministers.*

A "Man" (passing the Factor).

Is Saul among the prophets?

Factor.

Why not, Dugald?

Saul found them singing in the dance,
And joined the sport, of course.

"Man."

This is no day for sport.

Factor.

Oh, that depends: I've known some
queer folk now

Whose acid looks would sour the
cream on Monday,

Yet make rare fun with sermons on the
Sunday.

"Man."

You are a flippant person; but your
day

Will not be long, though God may
wink awhile.

Factor.

I'll take my chance. The wink may
grow a nap

As you pray, Dugald. Few can stand
that long.

"Man."

Blasphemer!

[*Passes on to his seat.*]

Factor.

Hypocrite!

Tremain.

Nay, hold your peace ;
 I like not these men's looks : they're
 stern and grim,
 And knit their brows in silence, and
 their knuckles
 Are white, see, as they clench their
 great brown fists.

Factor.

Nay, never fear, sir. Don't I know
 them well ?
 The law is powerful ; not a man of
 them
 Dare wag his tongue at me.

Tremain.

They're in the mood
 For more than wagging tongues. And
 for the law,
 What if they have the right on't ?

Factor.

Let them break
 The peace, and then they will be in
 the wrong.
 I'll keep safe with the law. Lads,
 give the dogs
 A nip, and set them howling, when
 you hear
 The minister begin to clear his throat.

Tremain.

Why do you that ?

Factor.

'Twill be as good a joke
 As bumming of an organ in their ears,
 Or tuning of a fiddle for the psalm.

Tremain.

I pray you, stop. See you not every
 man
 Grasping his staff ? There is a
 thousand there
 For one of us.

Factor.

So be it. They would tell you
 "The Lord can work by many or
 by few."
 You do not fear that rabble ?

Tremain.

Yes, I do.

Somehow the big battalions always
 win,
 And one may doubt if God is on
 our side.
 Let them alone.

The people sing, to a Celtic tune,

" I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
 From whence doth come mine aid.
 My safety cometh from the Lord,
 Who heav'n and earth hath made."

Tremain.

'Tis a pathetic strain
 In a barbaric minor, long drawn out ;
 So the Greek chorus might be sung,
 when they
 Played a fate-drama in their sacred
 feasts.
 Hush ! stop that yelping. There will
 be cracked crowns
 If this go on.—But what proud pallid
 face
 Is that among them ? Oh, my stately
 Beauty,
 Pallas-Athene of the waterfall,
 And Doris' pet aversion, whom I have
 To strangle, drown, or poison—
 anything
 But love. I think I'll throw me at
 her feet.
 It is a face to dream on ; safer there
 Than here, too, and the seats are
 not reserved.

[Crosses to INA, and lies down on the grass.]

Factor.

White-livered fool ! But let him go.
 What's this
 The minister is after ? Make a speech

Without a text! Who ever heard
the like?
And what's come of the prayer? Be
ready, lads.

Minister.

My friends, this is a day of solemn
sadness
With us, for we shall ne'er all meet again
Here where our fathers met these
hundred years,
Remembering the love of Him who
came,
In power of sorrow, to redeem from
sorrow,
And sin which is its fountain. It is not
That sere and withered leaves shall
drop in autumn;—
That always will be: nor that tender
buds,
Frost-bitten, die untimely in their
spring:
Nor that the hale and well may also fall,
Reft by the stormy winds;—all that
may be
To any people, and at any time:
To-morrow only knows what it shall
bring.
But human law, defying the divine,
Which gave the land for man to
dwell therein,
And to replenish and subdue its
wildness,
Straining the rights of those who own
the soil
By writs and deeds, wherein they gave
it over
Who had no property in it to give,
Has torn up by the roots a band of you,
Loyal and dutiful and fearing God
As any in the land; and nevermore
Shall we together sing our psalm of
praise here,
Or break the bread, or drink the cup
of blessing.
Therefore is this a solemn day with us,

Touched with the sadness of their
leave-taking,
And with regretful memories.

Factor.

Take care, sir,
You're on the verge of treasonable
speech
Against the law.

Minister.

We do not break the law,
Even when it breaks the hearts that
it should bind
Closer to home and country. Neither
would I
Pour Mara water now into the cup
Heaven sweetened with the wood of
His dear cross,
Who loved us. Men may wreck your
happy homes,
But God is building better mansions
for you.
They make a desert—He a paradise;
They drive you over sea, but He will
bring you
Where there is no more sea. And
we should take
The losses and the crosses of our life
As hooks to fasten us to that better
world.

Factor.

Ay, that is right. They'll find a
better world
In Canada; you hook them on to that.

Minister.

Be silent, sir. I will not speak of her
Whose high imperious order drives
you forth,
Homeless—

Factor.

Nor will I hear a generous lady,
Who is too good a landlord for such
people,
So shamefully abused. I tell you, sir,
This is mere cant, fanatic and illegal,

Stirring ill blood in those who know
no better

By those who should know better.

Minister.

Pray you, sir,
Have patience; I have spoken nought
amiss;

Do not disturb our worship.

Factor.

Worship! call ye't?

You preach against the law and call
that worship!

Against the landlord, and that's
worship too!

I will not hold my peace. You
people, hear!

Go to your homes, or to your parish
kirks,

Or it will be the worse for you.

This place

Is not for people to denounce the law,
Or landlords in their legal rights.

The Book

Will have you to obey the Powers
that be,

And speak no evil of them. There
is clear

Chapter and verse for that. A pretty
worship!

Minister.

Take heed, sir, what you do. You
have no law

For this.

Factor.

Away! I tell you, or I'll set
The dogs upon you.

A "Man."

Och! ochone! and is
The Lord, too, banished from
Glenaradale

To Canada?

Another "Man."

Ochone! will it be Baal
Or Moloch that the factor will be having

On the high places to pollute the
land?

Another "Man."

It is a day of darkness and dismay,
A day of wrath for broken covenants,
And for dishonoured Sabbaths.

Minister.

Sir, I warn you
The people now look dangerous. Be
quiet,
Or leave us: do not drive them mad.

Factor.

Away!

Ye are trespassers, and I know you
well!

I will have writs out on you by
to-morrow.

A "Man."

Now, who will come with me to help
the Lord
Against the factor?

A Fisherman.

That will I do, Dugald.

A Crofter.

Yes, and it iss not you will be alone.
Away with him! He tore my shiel-
ing down,
And Ailie's babe just born.

Another Crofter.

And he insulted
The minister! Yes, it iss fery well!
There iss the 'Tod's Hole yonder, and
the Loch
Iss deep below it.

Crowd (rushing forward).

To the Tod's Hole with him!

Minister.

Nay, hear me, O my people, I entreat
you;
Do not this crime, for Christ's sake.
Will ye not

Listen a moment! O my God, that
men
Should do foul murder! On the
Sabbath, too!
Stay, stay, I tell you. Heaven have
mercy on him,
For they are deaf as adders.

Ina (rising up).

Morag, this

Is frightful. Kenneth, can you not
do aught
To help him? See, they drag the
wretched man
Struggling, entreating, cursing, praying,
while
They move in stern grim silence to
the gap
In the black ragged rock, that looks
right down
Into the Otter's Hole. [*To*
TREMAIN.] Can you look on, sir,
And see your comrade murdered?
You came with him
To find your sport, and lo! he finds
a death,
Too horrible, instead.

Tremain.

What can I do?

They will not hear the parson plead
in Gaelic,
How should they heed me with my
English tongue?
Indeed, I tried to stop him, but in vain.
Think you that, if I sung an Orphic
song,
Mellifluous, melodious, as e'er
Hushed Philomela, shamed of her
sweet strain,
These grim and silent executioners
Of Nature's law would listen? Truly
I would
Do anything, fair lady, for your grace.
And yet, to see your pity and your
terror

So tragically moved and beautiful,
I'd almost let him fall from cutting ledge
To jutting crag into the hungry loch.

Ina.

Tush!

Morag.

Well, this man is madder than a fowmart,
He would kill folk to see how one
might look.

Tremain.

Nay, not how you would look; there
is no grand
Pathetic grace in you.

Ina.

Now, who is that
Standing upon the sharp edge of the
rock
At the Tod's Hole. Ah! Diarmid.
All is well.

Sir Diarmid.

Go back, now, lads, and hear the
minister;
Vengeance belongs to God. You
would not stain
Your hands with blood from such a
puddle as this.

A "Man."

Out of our way, Sir Diarmid; we
have no
Quarrel with you, but this man's cup
is full.

Sir Diarmid.

I will not budge an inch, and you
must kill me
Before you break a bone of him;
and that
You would be loath to do. There;
you have given
The scamp a fright he will not
soon forget;
That's all you meant, and he de-
served it well,
Bully and coward!

Kenneth.

Yes, the Chief is right ;
Let him go now. I'll make a ballad of
His teeth that chattered like a castanet.

"A Man."

He hass been like an iron flail with teeth
To all the folk, sir ; but it iss your will.

Sir Diarmid.

Yes ; ere he go, then, let him have
a shake
Such as your terriers give an ugly rat,
And then have done with him. You
would not make
This day a day of horror and reproach
For such a cur as that. So : that
is right.

[They let him go.]

I do not wonder that your hearts
were hot.

Minister.

Now, God be praised, who brought
you here, Sir Diarmid,
Ere that was done which never could
be undone,
And put the heart in you, and gave
you power
Over the people's hearts to move
them, like
An instrument of music, at your will.
I marvel not that they were wroth
at him ;
The man is of an evil nature, hard
And insolent and cruel to the poor,
And servile to the great, and know-
ing law
Only to strain its power, and make
it hateful.

Tremain (coming up).

There, parson, now your Deus did
not come
In a cloud-chariot driven by mighty
angels,
But riding on a nag, a simple laird.

Minister.

Be not profane, sir ; and for you,
my people,
Ye have been saved from doing
greater wrong,
But wrong ye have done ; and how
shall we sing
The Lord's song, with the swell of
that late storm
Still rolling in our hearts ? Let us
go back,
And humble us, confessing all the sin.

[Return to their seats.]

Tremain.

Diarmid, the factor now will hate
you almost
As much as he will hate this pious mob.
You saved his life, 'tis true, but only
saved it
By showing him a thing to scorn
and loathe ;
You should have had more tact.
He'll not forget it.

Sir Diarmid.

What care I for his hatred or his love ?
But how came you, of all men, to
be here
Of all scenes on this earth ?

Tremain.

Why should I not
Enrich my soul with all experiences
Of life and passion, to be moulded duly
Into pure forms of art ? I came to see
The Christian superstition where I heard
The thing was really living. Up
in town
'Tis but a raree-show of surplises
And albs and copes and silver
candlesticks
And droning repetitions ; poor survivals
Of the old Pagan cult : or else it is
A small dissenting shop where
they retail

Long yards of worn-out logic, or
an ounce

Of bitter morals, with a syllabub
Of sentiment. But this is different.
I could have almost fancied I was back
With Cyril in the Alexandrian desert,
And throngs of howling unwashed
monks who hunted
A Neo-Platonist: only yon factor
Is no philosopher.

Sir Diarmid.

Came you not with him?

Tremain.

Well, yes; he promised I should have
some sport;
And there was Doris' tenantry to see to.

Sir Diarmid.

Are you so close confederates already?

Tremain.

We've but one thought, one aim, one
life between us.
And such a life! She is a glorious
galley.
Freighted with gold and gems, and
silks and spices,
And all the treasures of the fabled East,
And at a word she struck to me.

Sir Diarmid.

That's well;

You poets are the men to win your way
Into a maiden's heart by flattery.
Now, you must go and see the
factor home;
His bones are stiff, I fancy.

Tremain.

Nay, there is

A lady in the crowd—Pallas-Athene—
She sought mine aid, and I must go
to her.

Sir Diarmid.

Leave her to me; you must see to
your friend.

Doris would scarcely care to think
you left

Her factor for a stranger damosel.

Tremain.

Doris must learn to put up with a heart
That loves all beauty, and has room
for all.

I must go back to her.

Sir Diarmid.

Be off, I tell you,

Unless you'd rather I should hurl
you down,
'Stead o' the factor, from the 'Tod's
Hole yonder.

[*Exit TREMAIN.*]

The jackanapes! Yet, if he speaks
the truth,

I am near happiness. Now for Ina.

[*Goes towards her.*]

Ina.

Diarmid!

Sir Diarmid.

Come with me, Ina; let me take
you hence;

This scene has been too much for you.

Ina.

Ah! yes;

I know not if your courage, or my fears
Shook me the most. It was a daring
thing

To stand up in the breach, and brave
their fury.

Sir Diarmid.

Nonsense; I knew they would not
harm a hair

Of my head, more than sheep would
fly upon

The dog that herds them; and you
do not call

The collie quite a hero.

Ina.

Do not leave me,

Diarmid. I know 'tis silly, but I feel
So weak and trembling.

Morag.

Ina, you're not going,
Just when they've got all ready for
the work
Of this great day.

Sir Diarmid.

Yes, Morag, she must go.
Do you not see her shaking like a leaf?

Morag.

Black Eachan's giving out a psalm.
They'll think
It strange if we should leave now.

Sir Diarmid.

Never mind;
There, Ina, lean on me; my arm
is strong,

[*Move off.*]

And my heart lighter than it has been
lately,
For there were troubles that did threat
our love.

Ina.

Yes, I could see that something
was amiss,
Something that made you moody and
reserved,
Though you were only gentler, dear,
with me.

Sir Diarmid.

And yet you never asked me what
was wrong.

Ina.

I knew you would have told me if
I ought
To know; and though I longed to
share it with you,
I held my peace till you should speak.
It is not
For love to be too curious, but to trust.

Sir Diarmid.

And for that trust I thank you. More
than once

It was upon my tongue to tell you all,
And leave it to your heart—for it
is wise—

To say what I should do. But then
I thought

It would be mean to shift my burden off
And lay it upon you. Now it grows
clear,

However, and a day or two will end it.
Trust me till then, and then I'll never
leave you,

Till life leaves me. But there's the
boat all trim,

And a brisk breeze will take us
swiftly home.

CHORUS.

Oh that sail on the summer sea!
Can she ever forget its gladness?

Yet oh the haunting memory
Of those bright hours, when they
came to be

The wistfullest sigh of the day
of sadness!

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

CHORUS.

Close by a lake, beneath a long-
backed hill

A lodge stood new and bare;
Larch and spruce had been planted
there,

But they were still
Only like tufts of grass upon the long-
backed hill.

There, by no care oppressed,
The wanderer now found rest
Who had seen many cities, many men,
And many perils known,
And many a die had thrown
With risk of all his living now
and then.

Skimming the surface lightly and alone
Gaily he took what pleasure might
be got;

No higher life the stirring West had
shown,

The brooding East called forth no
deeper thought.

Yet could he shrewdly use his wits,
And had his cautious, prudent fits,
His memories also and regrets
That touched his heart with lights
from heaven,

Though he sat easy under debts
Of duty, that had surely driven
To their wits' end respectable good folk
Who went to church, and no com-
mandment broke.

SCENE—*Glen Chroan Lodge. DR. LORNE
and CHUNDRA, his servant.*

Chundra.

The Begum, sahib! I have seen her.

Dr. Lorne.

Tush!

We have no Begums here.

Chundra.

I saw her—her!

Dr. Lorne.

Why, man, she has been dead these
ten years past,
And more.

Chundra.

Yes, sahib, dead ten years; and yet
I saw her, and she smiled; and then
I said

What devilry is brewing?

Dr. Lorne.

I never knew

Of any ghost that had been ten
years dead,
And yet came smiling back. They
lose their smile,

Chundra, exactly in the seventh year,
And it returns no more, because they
have not

Lips, cheeks, or eyes to smile with,
though the teeth

Grin horribly. But, now, I'm rather
busy;

I'll hear you by and by. I am ex-
pecting

A visitor on matters of great moment:
You'll show him in, and see that no
one enters

While he is here. Have tiffin ready,
too,

On the instant notice, mind.

Chundra.

Yes, Doctor sahib.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Dr. Lorne.

I partly guess what Begum he has seen;
She's like her mother, doubtless.

Well, I've got

A pill to purge her devilry, if she
Is at the old one's tricks.

Chundra.

Sir Bennett, sahib.

Enter BENNETT.

Dr. Lorne.

Good-morning, Bennett. Had a
pleasant journey?

Bennett.

So so; your nags are good enough,
but then

Your roads are something perpendicular,
And what with ruts and rocks they
make hard driving.

Dr. Lorne.

There; how you lawyers grumble!
If you knew

The roads I've gone by dâk! And
for your climb,

You got the better view of scenery
Thought to be well worth seeing. But
now, Bennett,

Our Highland air is reckoned hungry
air ;

Shall you bait first, or work ?

Bennett.

Let us to business ;
It spoils alike the dinner and digestion
To have work hanging o'er you, like
the skull

At the old feasts.

Dr. Lorne.

So be it, then ; and yet
I fear your patience may be tried beyond
Endurance of your appetite. You know
Old travellers claim the right to be
long-winded.

Bennett.

I can recruit me at the sideboard there,
If you abuse your privilege.

Dr. Lorne.

All right.

And so now to my tale. You know
my brother,

The Parson, Ronald ; we were twins,
alike

In form and feature, but in mind——

Ah ! well ;

He was the family saint, and I the
pickle

From childhood. So he took to heal-
ing souls,

And I to doctoring people's pains and
aches

And indigestions—he for love of souls,
And I for love of fees. I did my

work,

As others did, by rule ; went feeling
pulses,

Looking at tongues, and writing out
prescriptions

With a good conscience, and a look
of wisdom.

I knew the dose was dropt into the
dark,

But it was what our high tradition
ordered.

Sometimes it cured, but how, I could
not tell ;

Sometimes it failed, and why I did
not know :

God orders all ; except He build the
house

They labour in vain that build it. So
I took

My fee, and silently allowed the *vis*
Naturæ medicatrix, and the *mors*

That beats with equal foot at every
door.

Bennett.

Quite right ; what other could you do ?

Dr. Lorne.

Even so

It seemed. And yet, if Nature worked
the cure,

Nature should have the fee too ; and
besides

My conscience got entangled with
new science

That would have no empiric, no hap-
hazard ;

And I must go but where it showed
the way——

And oh, it had so little way to show :
So I lost faith in all our Therapeutic.

Bennett.

Queer, now : I had a parson with me
lately

Wanting to strip his gown off. He
had dropt,

Bit by bit, all old formulas of faith,
And buried all his gods, he said,

and saw

No difference in his flock who came
to church,

And said their prayers, and hardly
pricked their ears

At any fresh negation ; traded, feasted,
And gossiped as before—nor worse
nor better,
A moral class of pure respectables.
But he opined his life would be a lie
If he went on.

Dr. Lorne.

And surely so it had been.
What counsel gave you him ?

Bennett.

Bade him go home,
And write his sermon, said I envied him
Having so clear a case, so plain a brief,
Authority so full, and absolute law
To preach the gospel. But the
fellow went

And took to writing novels—he is lost.
Yet it is odd that ministers and doctors
Should be so sceptic in their own
affairs :

You'll never find a lawyer acting so.
I have my doubts, like other folk, but
keep them
Clear of my business.

Dr. Lorne.

Some have doubts of it.

Bennett.

Ay, but they're laymen.

Dr. Lorne.

Lucky you that can
Doubt every thing, except that law
is right,
And bide unmoved when all around is
shifting.—

But to my story : like your parson, I
Flung up my craft, but did not take to
writing,
Having no knack that way ; and
though I had—

No faith in physic, I had faith enough
In my own luck. Therefore I went
abroad,

And drifted round the world, now up,
now down,

Making a fortune one day, losing it
Another, now in rags among the miners,
Then swaggering from a "hell" where
the croupiers

Hated the sight of me. A pretty game
Life is now, if you only have the pluck
To brave the worst it can do.

Bennett.

Maybe so ;

But how about your conscience now,
that scrupled
At physic ? Could it swallow dice
and cards ?

Dr. Lorne.

Quite readily : I take it that a
conscience
Is like an Arab horse that frets and
fidgets

In the strait streets where people
congregate ;
But let it free i' the wilds, and it obeys
The lightest touch. At last I found
myself—

After a run of luck in India—
Up in a native state—netting one day
Some hundred thousand, odds.

Bennett.

Then you came home
To your snug place here.

Dr. Lorne.

Not a bit of it.

I said, "Now, if I keep this, ten to one
'Twill vanish at the next turn o' the
wheel ;

And yet I cannot give the game up yet,
Or settle down, respectable, to grow
Fungi and mosses on my brains
at home.

But there's my brother, dear old fellow,
starving

In the old manse, where we all starved
in youth,
I'll send it him, and he will use it
well."

Bennett.

The whole of it?

Dr. Lorne.

Well, pretty nearly so.
I kept a nest-egg, or I scarce had been
Where I am now. But listen; I am
coming
Straight to the point at last. I knew
poor Ronald
Would never take it as a gift from me,
Would only bank it in my name—
he had
No notion of investing even—and so
If things went wrong, as they had
often done,
Why, it would go, as other gains had
gone,
To hungry creditors.

Bennett.

I see. But how
Avoid that, if he would not take your
gift?

Dr. Lorne.

That's what I had to settle. Well,
there was
A crofter fellow from Glenaradale,
Who had gone partners with me in
some ventures,—
Railway-contracting, money-lending,
what not?
I took him for my friend, for I had
done him
A good turn more than once. This
man I made
My banker; giving it in charge
to him
To send the money to my brother here,
When he next heard of me, which
should be soon.

Bennett.

But you took vouchers?

Dr. Lorne.

Surely; here they are;
And that is why I sent for you, to
know
If they be valid, as I think they are.
He dealt in money, managed our
exchanges,
Contracted, too, for railways; a smart
fellow,
Jobbing at everything, and everything
Brought money to him—so they said
at least.
But to my plot. Having set all this
right,
As I supposed, I went and drowned
myself.

Bennett.

Drowned yourself! Well, you take
your drowning kindly.

Dr. Lorne.

Next day there was a body—a white
man's
From the up-country somewhere—
floated down
The river with a pocket-book of
mine
Found on him, where they did not
know my face.
I read the notices of my decease
In the newspapers, one day, in Japan,
Months afterwards. They gave me
on the whole
A character for enterprise and honour,
My brother read at home with grateful
tears,
And I in Tokyo with mirth and
laughter.

Bennett.

What could you mean by such a foolish
trick?
How could this drowning help you?

Dr. Lorne.

Don't you see?

To take a gift of eighty thousand pounds
Was one thing to a kind of thin-skinned
conscience,

And quite another thing a legacy
From his dead brother lying in his
grave.

Bennett.

Well, well; you're a mad fellow.
But the money—

Dr. Lorne.

Was never heard of more. My clever
friend

Had married in the native state a
woman

We used to call the Begum—a volcano
Incarnate, an embodied thunder-bolt,
Fat, greedy, false, and cunning as a
serpent,

And yet a fierce tornado. I've no
doubt

She set him on to write that I had died
In debt, and hunted up some old
accounts

Which the poor parson paid. They
were but trifles,

Yet he would wear a shabbier coat
for them.

I almost could forgive the theft, but not
That dirty trick on him, the scurvy
rogue!

Bennett.

Ah! your too clever schemes miscarry
always.

But what came of your Begum?

Dr. Lorne.

Oh, she died

Ten years ago; and Cattanach came
home

With a fine half-breed daughter, and
my money,

Which bought Glenaradale; and then
he died.

Bennett.

The papers now? But did you never
write

Your brother?

Dr. Lorne.

No; he thought that I was dead;
And I thought oft, when things were
tight with me,

What plenty there would be in the
old manse,

And that somehow contented me.

Bennett.

The vouchers?

Dr. Lorne.

Well, here they are; it was a native
lawyer

Drew them up for me, but I think
they're right.

Bennett.

Leave me alone a while;—at least be
quiet,

Unless I ask a question. 'Tis a case
Needs an old lawyer's skill. Of course
he held

That you were dead indeed, and the
temptation

Was too much for him. Opportunity
Makes rogues as heat breeds worms in
carrion;

You gave him just the chance to turn
a rascal.

A most mad business! Had you but
consulted

A lawyer, now, you might have had
your will,

And he might have been honest to
this day.

Dr. Lorne.

Nay, but he was a rogue in grain, I fear,
And never took the straight road, when
a crooked

Came handy to him.

Bennett (reading).

Right, right; clear as day.
Not a flaw in them. Who could have
believed
That a brown Hindoo could have
made a case
So tight as this? There's only one
thing now.
How about that same drowning in the
river?

Dr. Lorne.

Read on.

Bennett.

I see. Compeared before the Judge;
Witnesses certify that you are you,
And that the dead man was not you.
All right.
And now, sir, we may dine with easy
minds.

Dr. Lorne.

Then we can do it?

Bennett.

Do it! we can wring
Both principal and interest from his
heirs
To the last mite. I have not time
to sum it,
But it will take a many Highland acres
Of hill and moor to clear it; and
there's nothing
Will clear his character.

Dr. Lorne.

He had none to lose.
Then you will take the case in hand
for me?

Bennett.

Will I consent to eat your venison,
Pick well-kept grouse, and drink your
dry champagne,
Or orderly draw up a long account
For a good client? Will I consent,
quotha?
Why, if the case were only half a case,

Instead of what it is, a certainty,
There is no lawyer could refuse so neat,
Compact a job. It's really beautiful.

Dr. Lorne.

Then we shall go and dine.

Bennett.

By all means dine.
I never felt both appetite and conscience
So sweetly go together. If you have
A bottle of old port, you're safe to
draw it;
'Twill not be wasted on me.

CHORUS.

So they sit there and drink
Port, crusted, that mellows
Even crusty old fellows
That are well on the brink
Of the threescore and ten
Appointed for men
To labour and think,
And to eat here and drink.
Oh the night that they spent!
And the stories they told!
And the bottles that went
Like shorn sheep to the fold!
What did the ordered household say?
And what could the old men think
next day?

ACT IV.—SCENE II.

CHORUS.

When frank, straightforward hearts
defile
Their ways with some unwonted wile
And crafty stroke,
In their own gin they are oft ensnared,
And better they had onward fared
With simple folk.
The choicest and wisest
Of all the world is he
Who talks still, and walks still
In clear sincerity.

Let moles work underground, and mine,
 Let adders creep with supple spine
 Through grass and ling,
 Let pewits lure you from their nest
 With wailing cry, and drooping crest,
 And broken wing:
 But you, man, be true, man,
 And, artless, jog along
 The highways; for byeways
 Will surely lead you wrong.

SCENE—*Cairn-Cailleach*. DORIS and
 FACTOR DUFFUS.

Doris.

There, Duffus, never mind: you're
 not much hurt,
 And they shall pay for this.

Factor.

My bones are whole,
 But all my joints are aching, and my
 feelings
 Cruelly wounded. Does that count
 for nothing?

Doris.

Well, well; we'll find a plaster soon
 to heal
 Your wounded feelings: we'll have
 law on them.
 You say Sir Diarmid took their part?

Factor.

He did;
 Mocked me, insulted me, called me a rat
 For dogs to worry, bade them shake
 me well
 As terriers might. He seemed to
 save my life,
 But I believe 'twas all arranged before.

Doris.

And Ina Lorne was there too?

Factor.

Yes; I saw her
 Stand up and wave her hands, as
 hounding on
 Their murderous fury.

Doris.

Enter your complaint then;
 Get the ringleaders clapt in jail. The
 sheriff
 Will not be slack in dealing with
 those "Men"
 Who mar our mirth and music.

Factor.

Yes; perhaps
 They might be brought before the
 higher court,
 If we went warily about it. Some
 Have even been hanged for less.

Doris.

I daresay. Well;
 At any rate we'll make them rue this job,
 Gentle and simple of them. Now,
 good-bye;
 Drive to the town and get your
 warrants out.

Factor.

I'll lose no time.

[*Exit FACTOR.*]

Doris.

A letter from Sir Diarmid,
 Formal and stiff, asking an interview.
 What does it mean? It cannot be
 this riot,
 And threatening of the factor's life;
 that is
 Too trifling, though I'll make them
 suffer for it.
 It looks like business, and yet our affair
 Had never less of promise, as I think.
 What can it be. He is too much a man
 To beg remission of his debt. What
 then?
 Can he have dreamed that I have
 given my heart
 To that word-monger who would buy
 my wares
 With promises to pay, and no effects
 To meet his promise? Well, if that's
 his game,—

As I half think it is, being so shallow,
And like a man's dull wits—if he will
ask me

In the fond hope that I will now refuse,
Being love-pledged to yonder popin-
jay,—

Oh, the flat fool!—Do I then love
him truly?

I hardly know; it might have been
so once,

Had he once truly sought my love;
but this

I'm sure of, that I hate with all my soul
The girl that robbed me of him.

Could I break

Her heart now, though I wrecked my
life on it,

Would I not do it? Once I thought
to send

That popinjay to her, in hopes that he
Might babble a love tale into her ear,
And make her public by a wicked poem:
Or false or true, it matters not. But that
Had been a bootless errand; for she
moves

Like some clear star in the serenities,
So far beyond his reach he could not
smirch her

Even by his praise. But there. The
hour is near,

And I must smooth the ruffles from
my face,

Try to look sweet and innocent, and yet
Keep my head clear. I may need all
my wits.

Enter SIR DIARMID.

Sir Diarmid.

Good-morning, Doris! You are
looking radiant:

I need not ask, How do you?

Doris.

Well, of course;

That question is a superfluity
Of custom, at a loss what else to say.

But now I think on't, is there aught
ails you?

You scarce reflect the radiance you
are pleased

To see in me.

Sir Diarmid.

Oh, I am always strong
And healthy as a ploughman. But
we men

Have cares of business on us; and,
besides,

Our faces never have the light of yours;
They are horn-lanterns, and their light
is dim,

Fit only for the stable.

Doris.

Oh! But, Diarmid,
I never knew you were so greatly bent
On business. Yet I'm glad: it's
like a man.

Boys only think of shooting, fishing,
sport,

And girls of balls and dresses. But
a man—

You see how wise I grow—takes up
his task

Of duty bravely, or sadly at the worst.
This will delight your mother.

Sir Diarmid.

Nay, I know not
That I'm so fond of work, or that
my mother

Has any reason to be proud of me.
But, like or not like, one has work to do,
And trouble with it, and the less you
like it

The more it troubles you.

Doris.

Oh, but you ought
To like it, Diarmid. If you only saw
How sharply I look after my affairs,
And knit my brows o'er long accounts,
and make

My lips like wafers, doing dreadful sums!
And when they're done I jump right
up, and sing,
Or waltz about the room.

Sir Diarmid.

Well; my affairs
Will hardly set me waltzing as I look
Into them closely. It is well that yours
Leave you so light of heart.

Doris.

Why, what is wrong?—
Oh, by the way, my factor has been
here;
Poor man! his bones are full of aches
and bruises,
And he complains of you that you
encouraged
Those rascals of Glenaradale to worry
His life nigh out of him. I hardly
thought
That you would aid the rabble in
their outbreaks
Against their natural leaders.

Sir Diarmid.

He abused
Your ears in saying this. I saved
his life;
And that's his gratitude!

Doris.

Well, I only heard
His side, of course. I hope your
case is clear;
He has gone to the Fiscal to complain.

Sir Diarmid.

E'en let him go: he'll not make
much of that.
And, Doris, when the truth comes
out of this
Same natural leadership which never
leads,
And cares not for the flock but for
the fleece,

It will provoke sharp comment. In
these days,
We live beneath the eye and surveillance
Of all the world, and public sentiment
Is not with us, let Law say what it will,
For we have made it in our interests.

Doris.

Will public sentiment — whate'er
that be,
And I suppose it's just newspaper
babble—
Back up a threat of murder, and a brutal
Assault on one who simply did his duty?

Sir Diarmid.

No, surely. But was Duffus in the line
Of duty, jeering at the poor folk's
worship,
Setting his dogs a-howling to their
psalms,
And ordering them to leave the
hallowed place,
So linked with their most sacred
thoughts and feelings,
Where they had met these hundred
years?

Doris.

Of course,
You have been hearing Ina Lorne.
She'll find
Herself in trouble some day.

Sir Diarmid.

Be it so:
I'd rather stand with those poor men,
and bear
The sentence of the Law, than feel
the verdict
O' the general conscience cover me
with scorn.—
But it was not my errand to discuss
These matters with you.

Doris.

What then was the business
That brought you?

Sir Diarmid.

It is kind in you to give me
This meeting, though I fear I am
too late.

Doris.

Nay, you were punctual to a minute,
Diarmid,
I've noticed that you have that
excellent habit
Of business.

Sir Diarmid.

What I meant was, that my errand
Might be too late, forestalled perhaps,
and useless.

Doris.

What is your errand then? I cannot
think
What matter there could be between
us two
To make you stammer so, and hesitate.

Sir Diarmid.

Idle enough, if I may judge from all
I see and hear; and I confess my
claims
Are weak compared to his, for he can
give you
A name among the brilliant company
Of wits and scholars in the capital,
Who rightly could appreciate your
rare beauty,
And your fine gifts of mind. Well;
must I then
Congratulate you, Doris, or go on?

Doris.

I do not understand you; but go on,
If there be anything to go on to.

Sir Diarmid.

Pardon me. I had heard my friend
had won
Your love, as well he merits. He
said as much.

Doris.

Who gets his merits? Some folk
think themselves
Worth all the world, while all the
world thinks them
Too slight to be accounted of. You
friend,
Was he then boasting of a conquest?

Sir Diarmid.

Nay;
Not boasting, only glad, as well he
might be,
To win so fair a prize. And my
small merit
Is nothing beside his, nor could it gain,
I fear, by my poor telling. It did not
Astonish me that one so brilliant
plucked
The fruit from me.

Doris.

Was this your errand, then,
To know if I am plighted to your friend
Whom I'll not name, as you do name
him not?
I thought such questions commonly
were left
To curious women.

Sir Diarmid.

That was not my errand:
But that, if it were true, would make
my errand
A useless one, which need not trouble
you.

Doris.

Better to say out what you meant to say
About yourself, than question me
of love
Which, till it choose to speak, should
scarce be asked
To break its silence.

Sir Diarmid.

Well, I did not come
To speak of love, though love should
be the theme

Of such discourse. But truth is more
than all ;
And that you have a right to get.

Doris.

Please don't ;
It sounds so dreadful serious. There
is always
Something unpleasant in the wind,
when people
Tell you they'll speak the truth. In
schoolgirl days
'Twas always the preamble of a scolding,
And sitting in a corner to commit
Irregular French verbs and poetry.
Will it not keep? And could you
not for once
Say something nice, even if it were
not true?

Sir Diarmid.

Nay ; what I have to say must be
said now,
Unless your hand is plighted to
Tremain.

Doris.

Say on then what you have to say,
Sir Diarmid.

Sir Diarmid.

There was some compact, as I under-
stand—
If you knew of it, it was more than
I did,
Till some few days ago—between
our fathers,
That we two should be wedded. I
judge them not :
They thought they had a right to
guide our fates ;
They thought, at least, that it were
well to keep
The lands together ; whatsoe'er they
thought,
They bound us to each other, and
with cords
Hard to be borne or broken.

Doris.

Yes ; they put
Our hearts in pawn to ease them of
their straits.

Sir Diarmid.

No, Doris, that is what they could
not do,
And that's the truth you have the
right to know.
No one can bind the heart ; it is as
free
As air, and laughs at seals and
covenants.
Our hearts they could not pledge ;
yours now is free,
Or given to another, not to me.
I come not then—in this I will
be true—

To offer mine to you, or ask for yours,
But I can give my hand, as they would
have it,
Knowing it is a poor unworthy gift,
Almost an insult, to be thrown back
to me

In very scorn.

Doris.

And maybe you would rather
It were returned so.

Sir Diarmid.

That I did not say ;
But if you scorned it, I might feel
the less
Scorn of myself, esteeming you the
more.

Doris.

Why should I scorn you, that you
give me all
You have to give? A man can do
no more.

Sir Diarmid.

A man can do no more ; and yet I
fancy
He hardly could do less

Doris.

I do not know.

But, Diarmid, for your honoured
father's sake,—

Or is it for the sake of lands and gear?
We'll say the former; it sounds rather
better—

You sacrifice yourself. Then why
should I,

Since sacrifice comes natural to woman,
Fall short of your example?

Frankly, you
Offer a heartless hand, as frankly I
Accept it; so we both can keep our
hearts

Which, as you truly say, they could
not pledge,

Or raise a sixpence on them.

Sir Diarmid.

Do you mean

This truly, Doris?

Doris.

Surely; wherefore not?

It's just a family arrangement, with
The pious feeling that the fifth com-
mandment

Is rightly honoured, though the Law
is broken,

Which is fulfilled by love. They do
these things

In France, and find they answer
admirably:

A simple piece of business, and there
needs

No more about it.

Sir Diarmid.

Does there need no more?

Think again, Doris.

Doris.

Yes! we might exchange

Rings with each other, since we keep
our hearts,

Sealing our hands with that our hands
do wear.

Mine is a diamond; yours an opal—
is it?

Fickle, they say: but that's mere
superstition.

There, now; it's settled.

Sir Diarmid.

Can you then be happy

With such a bargain?

Doris.

Why, Sir Diarmid, what

Has happiness to do with it? It's
business;

And business has its profits or its
losses,

And if the gain is clear, what would
you more?

Sir Diarmid.

It's sin and certain misery.

Doris.

It is

Your own suggestion, and you surely
could not

Lure me to sin and misery. Indeed,
We manufacture sins, like yards of

cloth,
By these new-fangled consciences of

ours,
Framed not by nature, but by novels.

Look!

Here are our lands, that lie so close
together,

Fast-bound to us and to our progeny;
I am My Lady, or shall be; you,

the Laird
Of all; and each has got what each
would like

To have: then, as for happiness, our
hearts

Are free to seek it where it may be
found.

That was your own proposal, was
it not?

Sir Diarmid.

It's like a dream.

Doris.

But not an ugly one :

I'm not a dream, and some folk think
me pretty.

Sir Diarmid.

I know not what to say.

Doris.

Say nothing, Diarmid.

We can imagine silent love is grand,
Which, speaking, sounds most silly.

Do not try

To utter now the feeling that is in you.
Perhaps we might just kiss each other.

Yes,

It is the custom, I believe. Now, go.
Good-bye ; don't let your mother call
to-day ;

To-morrow I will see her.

[*Exit SIR DIARMID.*]

Now I'll have

Revenge at least, whatever come of
this ;

I'll break that proud girl's heart with-
in an hour.

CHORUS.

To be outwitted so !

To see your plot which was not very
deep,

Nor very noble, tumbled in a heap,

And all your hope laid low

By one who was less noble still,

Yet only took you at your word,

And led you on and on, until

She held you as a snared bird,

And while you scorned your mean
resource,

And felt you had been mocked by rule,

You wist not whether it were worse

To seem so like a knave, or else so

like a fool.

At the strangeness of it all,
At first, a loud hoarse laugh he raised !
And the shaggy big-horned cattle
gazed,

Wondering, over the mossy wall :

Then for a little he paused and pon-
dered,

Keenly revolving what to do ;

And off through bracken and bla-
berries wandered,

Nor slackened his pace till he came
in view

Of the low, green, honey-suckled manse
Beside the still salt Loch that lay as
in a trance.

ACT IV.—SCENE III.

CHORUS.

With a heart unquiet

To and fro she went,

Feeding on a diet

Of vague presentiment

From shadows without form, that
across her soul were sent.

So the daisied meadows

Close their petals white

When the brooding shadows

Make the day like night,

For shadows may be burdens to us,
when we live on light.

And she went on, pleading

He is fond and true ;

In a love-light reading

All that he might do—

Pleading, but the boding fear came
ever back anew.

Is it not a treason

To her love, to doubt,

And in search of reason

Thus to cast about,

The which, if she had loved aright,
she well might do without ?

SCENE—*The Manse Study.* INA (*alone*).

Ina.

Down, wicked doubts that leap on me
like hounds,
And soil me with your pawing. Well
I know,
He is the truest gentleman on earth,
Tender and brave; and now he is
my own,
And, honouring all women, loves but
me.
And I—I love him as a woman may,
Whose love is all her life. Why
comes he not?
This day was to deliver him, he said,
From all his cares, and make me all
his care,
Who would not be a care, but com-
fort to him—
But hush! I hear his step upon the
gravel,
Yet hurried and uncertain. What is
wrong?
Now let me gird my soul to share his
burden,
Or take it all myself, if so I may.

Enter SIR DIARMID.

Sir Diarmid.

O Ina, shall you ever look on me
So lovingly again?

Ina.

Ay! every day,
And all day long, I hope, if love of
mine
Can aught delight you. But what
ails you now?

Sir Diarmid.

Oh, I have been a fool, and properly
Have been befooled! for I conceited
me,
I was the cleverest schemer, though
an ass.
Can you forgive me, Ina?

Ina.

I shall hardly
Take you at your own value, nor am I
So very wise that your unwisdom needs
My pardon.

Sir Diarmid.

But it does. And what is more,
Until I have your pardon—and a
blank one,
To be filled up by utter idiocy
Of mine—I cannot even tell you, Ina,
The thing you have forgiven.

Ina.

Well; I think
My heart could anything forgive to you,
Except a change in yours.

Sir Diarmid.

And that is still
The same, has never wavered, nor
yet shall,
Though I have wandered in a brain-
sick dream
Of self-delusion. One thing more,
and then
You shall know all my madness. Can
you dare
To be a poor man's wife?

Ina.

Dare to be poor!
Nay, I have feared to be a rich man's
wife,
Being a poor man's daughter. Wooden
quaichs
Come handier to my use than silver
goblets,
And sometimes I have trembled when
I thought
My homely ways might shame you.
But what mean you?

Sir Diarmid.

No matter now; I'll tell you by and by.

Ina.

Nay, but if you do hint that for my sake
This lot must come to you, I could
not be
A wife to make you poor.

Sir Diarmid.

Oh, with your love
I shall be rich, and never shall regret.

Ina.

It is not your regret I fear to meet—
You are too noble—but it is my own.
The thought that I had lowered him
I loved,
Or that I was a burden to his life,
Or that he might have held a higher
place
And played a greater part but for my
sake,
That would quite crush me. To be
poor, I heed not,
But to cause poverty—I dare not do it.

Sir Diarmid.

Yet what if, lacking you, my life were
poorer
And meaner than the meanest, having
you,
Replenished with the only wealth I
care for?

Ina.

You glorify the thing you're fain to
have,
As poets glorify their favourite flowers,
Although but common daffodils. Yet
one
Can know one's self as none else can,
and judge
With less imagination. Let that pass.
But what is this you speak of? How
should you
Be poorer for your choice, but that
the choice
Is a poor one enough?

Sir Diarmid.

It is not that
Will make me poor. You are my
only wealth
Now, and because you are my all, I
cling
The more to you. For had I never
seen
The face I deem the fairest on this
earth,
Nor known the heart I prize above all
treasures,
This fate had still been mine. It must
be mine,
Whether you share and sweeten it
to me,
Or let me bear my burden all alone.
The thing that I must do to keep
my place
I could not do, except with self-
contempt,
And open-eyed dishonour, and the loss
Of all in life that makes it worth the
living;
And yet I have been fooled into a
promise
To do this very thing.

Ina.

You frighten me.
I do not understand. What have you
done?
'Tis sin to break a promise; yet it
may be
A greater sin to keep it; and between
The choice of sins, 'tis hard to pick
one's way.

Sir Diarmid.

Ay, truly it is but a choice of wrongs.
I made a promise that was false to love,
And break it that I may be true again:
Caught in the snare which I myself
had laid,
I must break from it, though I break
my troth,

For only being false, can I be true.
Oh, I am humbled and ashamed, as well
I may be. But you do forgive me, Ina?

Ina.

Yes, I forgive you. But I am per-
plexed,
What is it all about?

Enter DORIS.

Doris.

Oh, Ina dear,
Why do you keep a dragon like that
Morag,

Who cannot even nicely tell a lie
To visitors, but sends them from your
door,

Gruff as a bear? (*Starting.*) Ah!

You here, Diarmid, are you?

Well, you are favoured, Ina. Only
think;

That both of us should turn at once
to you

To be the first to hear the happy news!
Of course, he has been telling you.

Ina.

I know not
What you mean, Doris.

Doris.

Diarmid has not told you!
Well, that was kind to let me be
the bearer

Myself of my good tidings. Can't
you guess

Why I am here so happy?

Ina.

Truly no;
I am not good at riddles.

Doris.

But this is not
A riddle; and I wished you so to
hear it

From my own lips, and not from any
stranger,

Not even from 'Diarmid, who of course
would be

Clumsy at telling it. Yes, yes, I see
You know his ring; he put it on my
finger

An hour ago, and made me, oh so happy!
Now will you not congratulate me?

Sir Diarmid.

Ina,
Hear me. Nay, do not think I wish
to clear
Myself.

Ina.

Sir Diarmid, what you wish to do
Or not to do; and whether you are
right

Or wrong in doing that which you
have done,

'Tis not for me to say. Why should
you bring—

You, either of you—these affairs to me,
Settled between you? Doris, I am sure
You came not here to give me any joy,
And if you wished to pain me, you
have failed,

And lost your errand. Now, I pray
you leave me;

I have much work to do in briefest
time.

I hope that you will be a loving wife
And loyal; but these things concern
not me.

Adieu!

Sir Diarmid.

No, Ina, you must hear me out.
You should have heard the story from
myself

Ere now, but that I shrank from my
own shame,

And from your pain to hear it. Listen
then.

This lady has a right to all my land—
An honourable right by bond of law—

Unless I marry her; and I, who had
No right to use such mean diplomacy,

Plotted to make her love another man,
And get refusal of my own request,
Not for her love, for that I never asked,
But for her hand, the which I did not
want.

Yet she accepted that which was in
truth

An offered insult—marriage without
love

Frankly avowed. I thought—nay, if
you will,

I hoped that she would cast it back
with scorn,

As it deserved. O the blind fool I am !
But she picked up the gage, even so
conditioned

As any woman with a woman's heart
Would have despised to touch it.

No, I do not
Accuse her to you, or defend myself.

I have done that a man will scorn
himself

All his life long for doing.

Doris.

Handsome terms
For one who, unsolicited, besought

My hand an hour ago ! You shall not
mend

Matters in this way, sir.

Sir Diarmid.

I do not hope
To mend them, but to end them.

Hear me out ;
Frankly I do accept the poverty

My father has bequeathed me, and I
came,

Ina, to you to tell you this resolve.

Doris (singing).

“ The king says to the beggar maid,
I'll clothe me too in duds,
And we'll go mending pots and pans,
And camping in the woods.”

O rare idyllic love in tattered rags !

Sir Diarmid.

Ina, I was a fool, and dealt in craft,
Only to be the greater fool, the more
Crafty I seemed ; there is an end of
that

Doris, there is the ring you put on me,
Unasked.

Doris.

We made exchange, and for myself
I'll keep what I have got. I am not
one

To throw away a lover or his lands,
While I have wits to hold them.

Sir Diarmid.

Be it so ;

Take or refuse, it matters not to me :
My choice is made. From henceforth
I will be

Honest, however poor. And—pardon
me—

I had no right to insult you with an
offer

Which you, perhaps in mockery,
accepted,

Which I, at any rate, in simple man-
hood

Ought never to have made. Take all
my rights, then ;

They're justly yours—my house and
lands and all

My fathers did enjoy ; but understand
You have no right in me for evermore.

Ina.

Ah ! that is right, whatever else was
wrong.

Doris.

Oh, yes, of course he'll give up all for
you.

Ina.

'Tis nought to me. I have no interest
In any of these doings. Only I
Would grieve to think of one I
reckoned true

And noble above many, falling from
The ideal of a better life, to be
A scorn unto himself. But fare you
well.

Doris.

Oh, it is all the high heroics here ;
The very air is tragical : we stalk
And strut, when other folk would only
walk.
Moral-sublime's the rôle ! Cast to
the wind
Houses and lands and honours all for
love !
And yet I even dreamt you would
have thanked me,
That I would be content to take his
hand,
And leave his heart—to you. Good-
morning, Ina ;
Good-morning, you, Sir Landless ;
we shall scarce
Meet again soon.

[*Exit* *DORIS*.]

Sir Diarmid.

Is this the end then, Ina ?
You promised to forgive.

Ina.

I have forgiven ;
Though this was not, I think, within
the scope
Of possible thought then. But can
you forgive
Yourself as readily ?

Sir Diarmid.

Have I fallen so low
In your esteem, that you should think
this shame,
Like a boy's blush, shall vanish, and
he scarcely
Know it was there ? I have done
wrong, but from
That wrong I trust to shape a better
life,

Which else had been as the poor
gambler's luck
Fooling him to his ruin.

Ina.

May it be so :
And if it be, there's no one will rejoice
More than I shall, to know that this
has been
Only a passing cloud, which we re-
member
Not as a cloud, but as a freshening
shower
Redeeming the scorched land.

Sir Diarmid.

Redeemed it shall be,
If shame can work repentance ; but
resolve,
Knitting its brows, and girding for the
battle,
May yet lose heart, seeing no gleam
of hope
To brighten patience.

Ina.

There is hope of mending,
Of being once more what one failed
to be.

Sir Diarmid.

But none of Love ? That is a broken
cistern
That keeps no water for the broken
heart,
Being once cracked ?

Ina.

I pray you let me go :
Perhaps the broken cistern truly is
The only broken heart. Farewell !

Sir Diarmid.

Farewell !
I will do right though this be hope's
sad knell.

[*Exit* *SIR DIARMID*.]

Ina (alone).

Ah me! and I have lived through
this, and may

Have many years of such a life to live!
No warning of it—the volcano smokes
Before it bursts in flame, but here the fire
Broke suddenly beneath me, and my
world

Is blackened, scorched, and burning
under foot,

And not a blade of all its former beauty,
And not a little well of all its gladness
Remains, and no horizon to its darkness
Except a far-off grave! O weary life!
O Love, there is no joy like that thou
bringest,

Nor any grief like that thou leav'st
behind,

Being gone. God pity me! I was
so happy;

And while my heart was singing in
the light

Of its great bliss, the arrow pierced
it through,

And I fell prone to—this. What
must I do?

What can I do? No, there is nought
to do,

But only try to look as if the wound
Hurt me not, and to bleed so silently,
Girding a maiden's modesty about
A broken heart, that none may find
it out.

I blame him not; he has been weak,
not false;

At least, it was for truth that he
played false;

But oh, it is too hard. God pity me,
For my glad life is turned to misery.

[*Exit.*]

CHORUS.

What if your Dagon, falling down,
is broken,

Dagon, to whom your daily prayer
was spoken,

And the sweet incense offered, to
betoken

Faith that ne'er falters?

Pick up the fragments, piece them
well together,

Tenderly fit them each into the other,
Raise now the Fish-god, Lord of
war and weather,

High o'er his altars.

Ah! but your heart sank, shattered
as he lay there,

Peace you had none then, wailing all
the day there,

Yet as you look now, can you go
and pray there

Where you once wended?

Once he was glorious, your gilded
Dagon,

Throned on his altar, or borne upon
his waggon;

But he was broken, and how are you
to brag on

What you've just mended?

Here were the fractures, though
they're patched up nicely,

And he looks once more as he did
precisely;

Yet he can no more be so paradiselily
Perfect to you now.

Varnish the joinings, veil the sunshine
garish,

Dim light is fittest, when the soul
would cherish

As a thing sacred that which so
can perish,

Patched up anew now.

Broken her dream is, faded all the
glory,

All the cloud-castle fallen a ruin
hoary

Lost too the thread, and interest of
the story

Late so entrancing.

No more may he come to her maiden
vision

Robed in the splendour of a Power
Elysian ;

Only a man, he, feeble of decision,
Foolishly chancing.

ACT V.—SCENE I.

CHORUS.

Bears still the faithful servant on her
heart

The household joys and griefs, what-
e'er they be :

The well-trained hireling deftly plays
her part,

But clumsy service, fairer far thou
art,

Love moving thee.

“ Oh, 'tis our bargain—so much work
and wage ;

No more is in the bond,” as you
shall find :—

Ay ! but the unwrit bonds of God
engage

More than is set down in the formal
page,

Or Law can bind.

“ Yes ! but they are a plague, and
it is wrong

To let them be too free—it spoils
them quite ”—

Ay, love takes liberties, but you
may long

For one true heart amid a heartless
throng

On some dark night.

No love can spoil ; it perfects with
its touch :

And being free hath a familiar grace,
And like a babe even sacred things will
clutch ;

Yet life were dull and dismal with-
out such

Lights on its face.

SCENE—*Post Office.* MORAG and MRS. SLIT.

Mrs. Slit.

Och ! and it iss yourself, Mrs. Morag,
that will be a sight for sore eyes,
which it wass the loch said to the
hill when it came out of a month's
mist.

Morag.

Your eyes do not need salve, Mrs.
Slit ; they can do without me, and
without the spectacles too, for they
are as keen as a hawk's, though you
are not so much younger than myself
either. But I have been very busy,
and I have had my troubles and my
tempers too.

Mrs. Slit.

Yes, yes ! We are all born to
troubles and tempers, as the sparks
fly upward.

Morag.

It is just like the seal I am. I
get my head above the water maybe
for a minute, and turn this way and
that to see about me, and then I'm
down to the depths again among the
crabs and the tangles—that's the
troubles and tempers.

Mrs. Slit.

But Miss Ina will not have her
tempers, though.

Morag.

Will she not ? But she brings out
mine whatever ; and it is all the
same.

Mrs. Slit.

But an angel might do that, Morag.

Morag.

Girls are not angels, Mrs. Slit, as you would know if you had any. Angels will know their own minds, at least, and we have four and twenty minds in the four and twenty hours.

Mrs. Slit.

Yes, I know. It iss a great change to be left all alone.

Morag.

But she is not more alone now than ever she was before. For he would be always at his books and his sermons, as close as a limpet to a rock.

Mrs. Slit.

That iss true, but then he wass always there, Mrs. Morag, which it just makes the difference. My Eachan would be a useless body sitting there by the fire for years, cramped and twisted with the rheumatics. But he wass always there to be seen to, and to be wanting this and that; and it wass not like the same house after his arm-chair would be empty. Poor thing! it iss myself that can be sorry for her.

Morag.

But it is not for you, Mrs. Slit, to be calling her a poor thing, like any fisher-lass in the clachan; and her a lady, and a minister's daughter too!

Mrs. Slit.

Surely she iss to be pitied, Morag, for she iss in trouble, and which iss more, she iss an orphan, and which iss more, she will have no one to look to, but that ne'er-do-well uncle who iss here to-day, and nobody knows where to-morrow, away among

heathens or tinklers. Och! yes, she iss to be pitied.

Morag.

No, she is not to be pitied, but to be roused up, and told her duty, and to be respected, Mrs. Slit. And for her uncle, he will be giving her a house and a down-sitting like a duchess, when she will go to him; and he is not to leave Glen Chroan any more.

Mrs. Slit.

It iss yourself that will be going with her then, Morag.

Morag.

She would as ill do without me, Mrs. Slit, as the gull without the water.

Mrs. Slit.

Yes, that iss true, you have been with her all her days. And it iss riding in your coach you will be, and living like the princes and rulers of the earth maybe. When will you be going, now?

Morag.

I do not know when we will be going, or if we will ever be going, and I do not want to go near a house which is no better than a heathen's.

Mrs. Slit.

But she will have to go somewhere soon, for we will be having the new minister, and he will need the manse, no doubt, but I hear there iss no wife to come with him, whatever.

Morag.

Minister! Is it the lad you would be having two Sabbaths ago you call a minister? To think she must leave her father's house for the like of him!

Mrs. Slit.

What iss wrong with him, Mrs. Morag? He iss a very pretty man, and, which iss more, he hass the beautiful Gaelic.

Morag.

Maybe he has: but has he the Gospel, Mrs. Slit? We used to blame the old man because he was more dainty about his words than his doctrine. But this one, he will have no doctrine at all either about God or devil. For I heard him tell Miss Ina at her own fireside that the devil was a myth of the Middle Age. As if he was not as busy with young folk as he is with the like of you and me, Mrs. Slit!

Mrs. Slit.

Och! yes, that iss true, whatever. But what iss a myth, Mrs. Morag? You should know that have lived in a minister's house so long.

Morag.

Do you think that I swallow dictionaries then, because I live in a minister's house? I do not know what it is. But it will be something bad, no doubt, or it would not be spoken about him, middle age or not middle age.

Mrs. Slit.

Yes, it will be something bad. But he hass the good Gaelic.

Morag.

And the devil has the Gaelic and the English too, Mrs. Slit.

Mrs. Slit.

That iss true too; but he will have more English, Morag.

Morag.

Maybe, I do not know. He has

plenty Gaelic for his purpose. But is there no letter for us to-day?

Mrs. Slit.

Och! yes, there will be one for Miss Ina. I am thinking it iss from the laird himself. What will be taking him to London now, when we wass all hoping he would be come to settle among his own folk?

Morag.

How should I know what would take him to London? Maybe to bring an English wife to turn up her nose at us. But why did you not tell me of the letter before? and me wasting my time here that never gets out of doors till the bats are out!

Mrs. Slit.

But it wass yourself never asked till this fery minute, Mrs. Morag.

Morag.

And what else would I be here for at this time of day?

Mrs. Slit (examining letters).

That iss for my lady. It iss thin, and wafered, and blue paper, and will be an account, no doubt; they are not fery welcome at the castle, I fear. There iss no hurry about that. This iss from the gamekeeper to the factor they would be for drowning in the loch. It can wait; he will not be caring for letters yet, I'm thinking. And there iss half a dozen for the long-haired poet-man that will be courting Miss Doris. It iss a bold man he iss, or maybe a blind one, whatever.

Morag.

Who is he, Mrs. Slit?

Mrs. Slit.

I do not know. But he will be

getting many letters and printed papers, and they say he is a great poet in the Sassenach. But, to be sure, that iss not like the Gaelic.

Morag.

Is he often with Doris then?

Mrs. Slit.

Och! they are like clam-shells; there iss no parting them. And he will speak sense to her maybe, but it iss just heathenish gibberish he will be talking in my shop.

Morag.

That will do now. There is Ina's letter. I have been too long away from her. But I was to be sure to ask about your Oe that had the fever.

Mrs. Slit.

Yes, she iss a kind lady, and thinks of everyone. Allisthair iss better now, and will be at the fishing again soon.

Morag.

And how is the fishing and the whisky?

Mrs. Slit.

Not more than usual, Morag, but always too much of the whisky, whatever.

Morag.

Yes! They will be like Donald Levach who was drowned in a ditch; and his last words would be—You are changing the drink, and there is too much water in it, Jenny, too much water.

[*Exit MORAG.*]

CHORUS.

Truly she did not know it,
Dreamed not of humour or mirth,
Made not an effort to show it,
Travailed no whit in its birth:

Just it came to her easy,
The quaint, odd satire and fun,
Without any purpose to please ye,
Or pleasure in its being done.
Hard and grave were her features,
Though lit up with love now and then,
For laughter was not for such creatures
As sinful women and men.
It was simply the way that she reasoned,
The natural shape of her thought,
While it looked as if cleverly seasoned
With a sharp biting wit she had got.
O ye that strive to be witty,
And hunt through your brains for a
quip,
When ye have caught one, in pity
Silence it straight on your lip.

ACT V.—SCENE II.

CHORUS.

Shall not a woman insulted have her
revenge on the man,
Mock at him, laugh at his anguish,
smite with what weapon she can,
Cut where the wound shall be quickest,
smile as he writhes in the dust,
Mirthful when he comes a-begging an
obolus now, or a crust?
Does not the feeling of injury strike
out seeking redress?
And why should the gods plant in her
a passion she is to repress?
They know their business, and did not
fashion our nature to be
A soft-hearted, soft-headed, milk-and-
water philanthropy;
There's a hard grit in it, meant for use
at the fitting time,
That rogues and villains may know the
bitter bad taste of crime.—
Oh, be gentle and meek, and kiss the
hand hot from the blow,
And stint your soul of the pleasure, the
keenest of all that we know!

Drive the winds over the ocean, yet
say to the mad waves, Peace!
Why should you lift up your heads
now? there, let your murmurings
cease!
Easy to say, Forgive, and lay up your
wrath on the shelf:
But how, if you take it so tamely, shall
you respect yourself?
If you're a worm to be trod on, trod
on you shall be again;
Never a woman insipid found chivalrous
spirit in men.—
So did the wild heart brood now,
passioning so in her wrath,
And plotted to sweep her victim
ruthlessly out of her path.

SCENE—*Room in Cairn-Cailleach.* TREMAIN
and DORIS.

Doris.

Well, sir, what think you of this gear?

Tremain.

Think, Doris!

I am past thinking: there's a social
earthquake
Shaking my world, and toppling all
things down,
While darkness reigns, and mystery,
and silence.
What does it mean? There's Diarmid,
on a sudden,
Off like the swallows, with no fare-
you-well,
And leaving no more trace than flight
of bird
Through the impassive air; his mother
packing
To follow him, and not a word to
explain,
But Celtic exclamations all day long.

Doris.

So he is gone already.

Tremain.

Ay, he's gone;

But why and whither has he gone,
and left
His guest to seek for other quarters,
just
When one was taking to the place,
and felt
Its strangeness, which at first was like
a dream,
Growing familiar, with a taste of life
Fresh as the salt sea breezes?

Doris.

Gone already!

I did not count on that. And she's
off too,
After him, doubtless. Much help I
have got
From your fine phrases, sir. At every
point
Baffled and mocked! I'm weary of
you all,
But I will have revenge at least.

Tremain.

What's all

This rage about? It is a pretty play,
And it becomes you rarely, as indeed
All that you do becomes you; yet
I like
My Doris tender more than Doris
fierce,
Although the softness is more beautiful
By reason of the wrath restrained.

Doris

Pshaw! give me

Deeds and not words: I've had
enough of them!
You were to get that girl out of
my way.

Tremain.

And out of it she is: well for herself
I daresay.

Doris.

But not well for you, that she
Should drive off like a princess,
followed by
The prayers and tears of all her
subjects here—
The cripples, the rheumatics, and the
idiots,
Who burden this poor land.

Tremain.

Why ill for me?
She has not left a legacy of these
Impotent folk to me.

Doris.

That's as you will.
But he who should have humbled,
broken her,
And cast her from him as a thing of
naught—
Well, him I could have loved; I hate
her so.

Tremain.

And yet you went to see her lately.

Doris.

Yes;
I went because I had no man to go,
And do mine errand, and to smite
her with
A word should blight her life, and
break her heart,
As I had hoped it would. But with
the look
Of a grand tragedy-queen she bade
me be
A dutiful wife, forsooth, to my
affianced,
And wear with grace what I had won
by guile.

Tremain.

Affianced, Doris! am I then to take
This ring from your fair finger, and
put mine
Here in its room?

Doris.

You take my ring from me!
Sir Diarmid's ring!—yes, his engage-
ment ring!
I'd sooner part with life than part
with it.

Tremain.

What do you mean?

Doris.

Oh, I forgot. You know not
The pretty silly farce we have been
playing,
Which is to end in fateful tragedy.
Diarmid came here one day, insult-
ing me
With offer of his hand, but not his
heart—
A mere wired flower to wither on my
bosom—
Hoping to be refused, and keep his
lands
And sweetheart too, because he heard
I loved you.
As if I could not see through such
a thin
Shallow device, which he did hardly
colour
With any show of likelihood!

Tremain.

Of course

You did refuse him?

Doris.

No; but at a word
Frankly accepted him on his own
terms;—
Hands without hearts, vows that were
lies avowed.
Would you have had me do the
very thing
He hoped that I would do, and strip
myself
Of all my rights that he might wed
that girl?

Tremain.

Well; you accepted only as a *ruse*—
My clever Doris—meaning, by and by,
To wreck his hope more wholly.

Doris.

Not at all.

You poets, oh, how little do you know
The women, after all, you're fain to
paint!

You see their eyes and hair, and hear
their words:

But for their minds they are too fine
for you.

Men's brains, I think, can have no
convolutions,

They go at things so straight and
stupid, like

A gaze-hound at a doubling hare.

Tremain.

Nay, Doris,

You could not surely throw away my
love.

Doris.

Why should I throw away your love,
because

I take an offer offering no love?

Should I not need, and prize it all the
more,

That it would give me what my fate
denied?

I've heard you say that love is poetry,
And marriage languid prose that never
stirs

The pulse of high imagination, having
No passionate music in it. I must have
Some poetry in my life, and you could
give it.

Tremain.

Yes! So! Like verses in a magazine,
I might come in to fill a space, a blank,
Between the story and the criticism;
Not even like the Chorus in the Greek
Drama, to fill the passion up, and cry

To the stern fates for pity. Thank
you, Doris,
But love like mine will hardly serve
for padding.

Doris.

What ails you now? A badly written
book

May have its very essence and its life
In the appendix. And my life

without you

Were dull enough with him.

Tremain.

You did not mean, then,

To marry him really.

Doris.

Indeed I did, and would;

I should have made his life a misery

Perhaps, and seen him bitterly repent

His dirty bargain; since we both agreed

To join our hands, and keep our
hearts apart.

And really I did mean it.

Tremain.

Beautiful tigress!

Doris.

Tigress, if you will; but who has lost
Her spring, and turns more savage on

her prey.

Look here. I will not hide a thing
from you:

We sealed our bargain by exchange
of rings,

And other pretty customary forms

Of kindness and affiance; and straight-
way

He hurried to that girl who set him on
To break his plighted troth: con-
tent she

To take him in the shame of such
dishonour.

Tremain.

How know you that?

Doris.

How do I know it? Why,
 I found them closeted together, heard
 His own false lips renounce the vow
 he made
 An hour before. Oh, he was most
 polite—
 My gentleman! and did his villain-work
 Like preaching; for of course he had
 been schooled,
 How best to lay the moral varnish on,
 And spout fine sentiment. I have
 sentiment;
 It is the flimsiest lie that walks the
 earth,
 The mere thin ghost of truth. He
 must admit
 With shame, forsooth, his offer was
 an insult,
 And as an insult humbly he withdrew it:
 He would not mock a lady with the
 boon,
 If boon it could be called, of loveless
 marriage:
 But frankly he had hoped I would
 reject it,
 Which now he was ashamed of like
 the rest.
 The moral prig! as if I did not know
 Where he had learnt his lesson!

Tremain.

So he parted
 With house and lands and honours all
 for love.

Doris.

And you too! You take up the
 tragic style
 To glorify a fool!

Tremain.

Yes, for I could
 Give all the world, too, just to win
 your love.

Doris.

Not long ago you said I was a tigress.

Tremain.

Even so; a grand and proud and
 terrible beauty,
 A matchless strength of passion good
 or evil,
 Like a volcano, having on its slopes
 Fair vineyards here, there burning
 lava-floods.
 And howsoe'er you show, you do
 transfix
 My soul with admiration.

Doris.

Oh! Perhaps
 You think my fires have burnt up
 Diarmid's share,
 And now the sunny slopes are for
 your vines.

Tremain.

Why not? You know that poets
 always were
 Alike the favourites of the gods and
 demons;
 And he is gone whom you did never
 love,
 While I am here whom you have said
 you loved.
 What then will you do next?

Doris.

I will pull down
 Each stone of that old house, and
 scatter all
 The gatherings of ages — pictures,
 tapestries,
 Arms, chinases, books, and nick-nacks,
 every heirloom
 And symbol of their greatness, send-
 ing them
 Where never can he hope by any
 chance
 To pick them up again: and then
 I'll make
 A forest of the place, and stalk the deer
 Over his threshold.

Tremain.

You are thorough, Doris.

Doris.

Ay! he shall find that, who has flouted me.

Tremain.

Where is he now?

Doris.

Nay, you should know that best.

Tremain.

I know not. There is only Celtic wailing
All through the house, and I have found a shelter
Down in the village.

Doris.

He is gone at least;
And she, too, is away — perhaps with him.

Tremain.

Nay, she went with her uncle yester eve;
I saw her go, and thought her looking pale.

Doris.

Oh yes! you take a mighty interest,
Like others, in her movements and her looks!

Perhaps, too, you are fain to sacrifice—
If you have any such to offer up—
Houses and lands and honour for her love.

By all means do: you have my full consent
To play the fool as he did.

Tremain.

I could play
The fool indeed like him, but not for her:
I think I am even more a fool than he,
Clinging as for dear life to one who bids me

Go seek another love. You know well, Doris,
'Tis easy saying to the captive, Go,
When he is bound and fettered.

Doris.

My poor boy,
Are you so deep enthralled? But what was that
You said about an uncle? She has none.
Her father had a brother once in India
Was something to my father—agent, factor—
What not?—a scant-o'-grace and ne'er-do-well.
But he is dead, oh, years and years ago.

Tremain.

I tell but what I heard. Some one at least
Carried her off last night. I saw them go;
They said he was her uncle. Enough of her.
I know not why you should so hate her, Doris,
Or so hate anything. 'Tis so much better
To love, which sweetens all things like a flower.

Doris.

Ay! better truly for your sluggish souls,
Which, like your English rivers, creep along
Oily and dull and muddy. But for me
My love is hotter than can boil in your
Slow veins, and yet I hate more heartily
Than I can love.

Tremain.

When shall I call you mine,
Doris? Then you shall see how I can love.

Doris.

Why, that you call me twenty times a day.

Tremain.

Nay, do not trifle. Let us fix the time,
Since there is nought to come between
us now.

Doris.

Oh, fixing times is stupid. I should hate
The day I fixed, and change it in
a week.
Or, when it came, should keep my bed,
and sleep
Its hours away, unnoted. But I thought
You were content to love, and held
that marriage
Was like the lump of ice in the
champagne,
Cooling and weakening passion.

Tremain.

Then I knew not
The agony and ecstasy of love,
The rapture and the misery of hope,
The jealous watching through the
troubled nights,
And sinking of the heart. Say when.

Doris.

I cannot.
Maybe a year hence I may settle in
The dull jog-trot of marriage—may-
be never.
Who knows what is to happen?
I'm content
Meanwhile that things should go on
as they do.

Tremain.

You cannot love like me, then.

Doris.

Go away!

I cannot babble sentiment, and coin
My heart into a ballad to be sold
To publishers, and sung by silly maids.
And if you are not satisfied with that
Which I can give you, there are lots
of girls

Will lend their ears to hear your
dainty speeches,
And even to believe them—they're
such fools.

[*Exit.*

CHORUS.

So she let him go,
Puffing him away,
Like a flimsy bubble,
Never more to trouble
Her upon her way.

So she let him go,
Back to his old gods,
Jove and Aphrodite,
Thor and Odin mighty,
And his songs and odes.

So she let him go
To fulfil his bent
In his pagan ethic,
And his fond æsthetic,
And his self-content.

So she let him go
With a mocking smile;
Yet no heart was broken
When her words were spoken,
Though he moped a while.

ACT V.—SCENE III.

CHORUS.

Ai me! ai me!
Fate sits upon the steed
Behind the soul whose passion holds
the reins;
Ai me! ai me!
Better the bending reed,
When the gods thunder, than the oaks
and planes.
The reed remains, when their proud
strength is shattered.

Ai me! ai me!

There's madness in the cup
Which jealous wrath mingles in
hellish spite;

Ai me! ai me!

And when we hold it up,
It laughs and lightens gaily to the sight,
Yet in its might the might of man
shall perish.

SCENE—*Room in Cairn-Cailleach.* DORIS,
DR. LORNE, and BENNETT.

Doris.

What would you, gentlemen? My
time is brief.

You ask an interview, and fix the time,
Nor wait to know my poor convenience.
No matter. Only let us to the point
Without preliminary phrasing. My
Mare yonder waits for me, and grows
impatient.

Bennett.

We have a little business——

Doris.

Business! Oh!

Here is my factor coming, and he does
All business for me.

Enter FACTOR.

Let me introduce you.

Bennett.

Happy to know the gentleman; but we
Crave audience of yourself for this affair,
Which he can scarcely order, not
at least

Till you shall give him your authority
Express. Yet it is well he should
be here

To counsel you.

Dr. Lorne.

Miss Cattanach, of course
You got the papers which I forwarded,
And so far are prepared for us.

Doris.

And pray

Who is this peremptory gentleman?

Dr. Lorne.

My name is Lorne—a friend once of
your father's.

Doris.

I've heard of such a person—but
he died;

Was drowned, or drowned himself—

I forget which;

But people said it would be a relief
To all his kinsfolk. Any friend of his?

Dr. Lorne.

Only himself, come back to plague
his friends

Who hoped he had relieved them of
his presence,

And who will welcome him like
other ghosts

That can't lie quiet in their graves.

And now

About those papers, Miss?

Doris.

What papers? Oh!

That trumped-up story of his being alive,
And claiming monies trusted to my
father

Years ago; yes, I think the papers came.
I did not read them; they are
too absurd,

And you may have them back now if
you like.

They're somewhere i' the waste-basket.
I'm advised

To prosecute you for conspiracy,
If you are he that sent them; but
the writer

Is fitter sure for bedlam.

Dr. Lorne.

You are well

Acquainted with their purport, for
a person

Who never read them. As I never doubt

A lady's word, I must conclude you knew

The facts already. That will shorten matters.

Bennett.

Listen, Miss Cattanaich; these are grave affairs;

And with a kindly purpose we are here To choke a painful scandal in the birth, If so we may. You could not overlook Those documents.

Doris.

Well, no; I told a lie,

A stupid one too. Yes, I read the trash With laughter as it merited. It seems You'd rob my father of his honest name—

Who, you say, was your friend—when he is dead,

And cannot answer for himself; and next

You would rob me, and being but a woman

Weak-nerved of course, you point your pistol at me,

Shotted with stuff incredible, demanding My money or my life—brave high-way-man!

Pray you now, pull the trigger, sir, and see

If I shall wince.

Dr. Lorne.

So that's your line. And now Your factor here, does he approve of it?

Doris.

Sir, I can manage my affairs as yet; I am of age, and not quite fatuous; But you can ask him.

Factor.

Yes, I do endorse

All that my lady says.

Dr. Lorne.

So be it, then;

There's no more to be said, I apprehend. Come, Bennett, let us go.

Bennett.

Nay, not so fast.

Do not by haste or wrangling further snarl

A knot already hard to disentangle.

My fair young lady, you can hardly know

The chances or the certainties of Law;

But if I had a little while alone

Now with your agent, I could make it plain

He gives you ill advice.

Doris.

No doubt, you two,

Being closeted together for an hour,

Would order all my life. But I prefer To shape it for myself.

Factor.

And I would leave

The Law to give to every one his due.

Doris.

As your friend says, I think there needs no more.

This gentleman who went and drowned himself

To benefit his family, that did not

Profit much by his living, turns up now

Modestly asking eighty thousand pounds,

With interest and compound interest

For ten or twelve years past. But since the payment

Of all these monies would go far indeed

To beggar me, he is content if I

Will give up to Sir Diarmid house and lands

Now forfeited to me.

Dr. Lorne.

Ay, so I wrote
In that same paper which you did
not read,
And have so clearly understood.

Doris.

Oh yes!

I understand it better than you think :
As thus : I read between the lines
that you
Have made a covenant to wed your
niece,
Miss Lorne, with Diarmid, who is my
betrothed,
But by her counsel falsely breaks his
word.
Now hear me. I will fight it to
the last,
And will not stint my vengeance,
though I starve
My life to feed it. I believe your
stories
Are lies from first to last about my
father,
From first to last inventions to entrap
Poor Diarmid in your snares. But
were they all
As true as they are false, as credible
As they are clean impossible, it
would not
Matter to me. That girl shall never sit
My lady in his house, and smile and
fawn
Upon the man whose plighted troth
I wear,
See, on my finger. There ; you have
my answer.
Our business now is ended.

[*Exit.*

Dr. Lorne.

A high-stepping
Filly, that now. But though her
tongue is sharp,
And she has touched me somewhat on
the raw,

I bear no grudge, if she had only left
Ina alone. I like a clever girl
With pluck and talent.

Bennett.

Was there ever creature
So reckless and unreasonable as
An angry woman ?

Dr. Lorne.

Well, I do not know.

She means to get from life the thing
she wants,
Cost what it may, as your philosopher
Will burn his diamond just to prove
'tis nought
But charcoal, and we call him wise.
It all
Comes to the same at last. One toils
for fame,
And from his garret where he gnaws
a crust
Scorns your respectable folk ; another
swings—
I've seen them—on a hook whose iron
digs
Into the flesh, and he too laughs at us
Who live by reason ; she is fain to have
Revenge for love insulted ; and perhaps
Each gets as much from life i' the
end as we
Who gather wealth, and think that
they are mad.
Only the pursuit pleases ; the possession
Is empty or bitter always. But these
aims
Have most intense delight, and in their
failure
A kind of tragic grandeur. That girl
now
Has lived, within this hour, as much
at least
As three good years of our lives.

Bennett.

Fiddlesticks !

She is a fool, sir, and her sentiments

Are heathenish or even devilish.

[*Looks out of window.*]

Look at her ;

She'll drive that horse mad if she curb
him so,

And lash him in her tantrums.

Dr. Lorne.

Ah ! that's bad.

Now, if she were a friend of mine, she
should not

Ride off alone, for horse and rider have
A wild eye in their heads. She
cannot mean

To take the old hill-road on such a brute.
Yes ! there she gallops up the rocky
path,

Past the old mill, at every hoof a brush
Of fiery sparks ; she's near the ash-
tree now

That sends a low branch right across
the way.

By Jove ! she's taken it like a fence,
and crashed

Right through the twigs and leaves.
Well ridden, girl !

Now, could I but throw off some
forty years,

I'd risk a ride through life with such
a mate.

She's out of sight now. There's an
ugly bit

Of road along the crags, above Loch
Dhu.

What's that ? I could be sworn it was
a scream ;

And there's no tramp of hoofs now :
it is fallen

Terribly silent.

Bennett.

Let us go and see.

CHORUS.

Up the steep path on the hill,
Past the wild race of the mill,

Leaping o'er branch and boulder-stone,
Madly the rider galloped on.

And up to the heights of that rocky
road,

Mad as her rider, the sorrel strode,
While her sharp ears were forward
turned,

And the quick smoke from her nostrils
burned,

And the evil white from her eye
had fled,

But it was bloodshot now instead,
As she swept past a twisted, grey,
Ghostly root where a young lamb
lay,

Picked till each several rib was bare
By hungry ravens that haunted there.

There were two lovers whispering
low

Among the bracken beside the brook,
Where the juniper bush, and the
ragged sloe

Made for lovers a sheltered nook :

There were two ravens that did croak
Over the lamb's ribs picked so bare ;

Was there no weakling of the flock
To make them another supper there ?

Clatter, clatter upon the rock,
They heard the hoofs of the sorrel
ring,

Only a muffled thud they woke,
Now and then, on the moss or ling.

Lovers and ravens then upsprung,
As nearer and nearer it came with
speed,

And a wild shriek 'mong the echoes
rung,

But it was not the woman, it was the
steed.

What had happened ? All now was
still,

Only the raven, hopping slow
To a giddy ledge of the rocky hill,
Kept peering down on the depths
below.

ACT V.—SCENE IV.

CHORUS.

A low-arched bridge,
 All tufted green with moss and
 maiden-hair,
 Spanned a slow stream
 That lapsed as in a dream
 Through sedge and willow and meadow
 flat and fair;
 And all around were great hills,
 shadowy, sharp, and bare.

On many a knoll,
 Silent, the golden plovers kept their seat,
 And in the stream
 That lapsed as in a dream
 The heron slumbered, cooling breast
 and feet,
 And you could see the air all tremulous
 with heat.

Ah! our unrest
 More restless grows when all around
 is peace;
 For life doth seem
 To lapse as in a dream
 Which hath not any fruit or due increase,
 And we do fret the more that the calm
 doth not cease.

O low-arched bridge
 With tinted moss and dainty fern
 o'ergrown,
 And thou slow stream,
 Lapsing as in a dream,
 More hateful ye than perilous stepping
 stone
 And turbid river, since peace from her
 heart has flown.

SCENE—*Bridge near Glen Chroan Lodge.*

INA and MORAG.

Ina.

This is the land of sleep; here no
 man works,
 Or thinks.

Morag.

The women work.

Ina.

Oh yes, they toil
 'Neath heavy burdens, while their
 lords, forsooth,
 Lie in the sun and watch them
 sweltering.
 I could not live here, Morag; it is like
 A life in death, oblivious listlessness
 That nothing cares for, and remembers
 nought.
 See, the slow brook creeps sleepily
 along,
 The trout are slumbering yonder in
 the pools,
 The cows lie on the grass with closed
 eyelids,
 Languidly chewing, and the yellow bees
 Wheel drowsily about. These inland
 lakes
 Are not like our sea-lochs; there's
 life in them,
 Motion and waves and pulsing of the
 tide,
 And on their shores we know that we
 are near
 The world's great highway thronged
 with busy life.

Morag.

You used to call Loch Thorar sleepy
 too.

Ina.

Ay, so it is, compared with busy streets
 Where eager industries do push and
 drive,
 And hurrying throngs answer the ring-
 ing bells,
 And huge unwearying machineries
 Are waited on by patient servitors,
 Like gods that must be tended morn
 and eve.
 There men and women work, and life
 is lived

At the full pitch, for there each man
is kept
Strict to his task at book or saw or
yardstick,
Or whatsoe'er his tool be, by the vast
Machine of civilisation.

Morag.

I am thinking
That no one wants to be just where
he is ;
We're fain to kick our shadows from
our feet,
As we might do our slippers.

Ina.

Maybe so ;
And yet I willingly would lose myself
In work which is not wholly for myself,
And thought which is not all about
myself.
Yes, I am weary of that.

Morag.

But there's your uncle :
Might you not work, and think a bit
for him ?

Ina.

He will not let me. He is all for
wrapping
A girl in cotton-wadding to be kept
Like a wax-doll. He is my slave
to fetch
And carry for me : I am his morning
thought,
His daily task too, and his evening
care.
I must not let the sun freckle my skin,
Nor yet the night lamp weary my
poor eyes,
Toiling at book or needlework or
music.
'Tis always *Me* that must be thought
about,
And I am sick of *Me*. Where did
he learn
His notions about women ? In the East

Among zenanas ? They are worse,
I think,
Than our rough crofters' ways.

Morag.

He's very good ;
You should be grateful, Ina.

Ina.

Grateful, yes !
But then to live is more than to be
nursed
And tended like a baby. What am I,
To get all this observance and respect ?
I want to be at work. This idleness
Is like the waste of water-power among
Our hills, which might have brought
the people bread.

Morag.

You're weary of being an idol to be
worshipped ;
And they do say a woman's soul
was meant
Rather to worship man, and maybe
guide him
To make him worshipful. Are you
sure, Ina,
It is the worship, or the guiding of him
That you have dreamt of ?

Ina.

Oh, all that is past.
There was a time of fond idolatry
When I did shrine an image in my
heart,
And never wearied burning incense to it,
And offering sacrifice, and singing lauds,
And building temples of imagination
For other votaries. That time is gone.
The glory and the beauty and the dream
Are vanished ; and the fire is burnt
to ashes
That choke when they are stirred. I
have no wish
Either to guide or worship, since the
stream

That sang along my path amid the
flowers
Is all gone dry and muddy and common-
place.
God help me !

Morag.

Ina, one day I was sailing
By misty Morven in the early morning,
And as I looked I saw upon the mist
My shadow, and the shadows of all
the rest,
And they were only shadows flitting
dim,
But on my head there seemed a golden
crown
Flashing with diamonds. So it was
with all ;
Each saw a halo circling his own head,
And all his neighbours only common
shadows ;
So is the vanity of youthful dreams.

Ina.

Nay, Morag, but the halo and the
crown,
In my case, did not rest upon my brow,
Where vanity would put it, but on his ;
And now there is no glory anywhere.
But work might bring forgetfulness.

Morag.

But, Ina,
Where can you go that trouble will
not come ?
You stand upon the beach, and there
the waves
Tumble and foam, and, looking sea-
ward, you
Are sure that all is bright and calm
and sunny,
Till you are there.

Ina.

But there, at least, you find
Ropes to be hauled, and sails to reef,
and waves

To battle with ; and I would, like the
sailor,
Rather a gale of wind than lie be-
calmed.
But there ; enough of me and my
affairs.
Have you heard aught of Kenneth
lately ?

Morag.

Ay !

Kenneth, poor lad, will never sing
again ;
His pipe is like the blackbird's, hoarse
and rusty,
Just as the summer comes.

Ina.

How do you mean ?

Morag.

You know that he and Mairi were
together
Sitting among the bracken on the height
When Doris took her last mad ride
along
The old hill road. 'Twas they that
brought the tidings
How her horse shied there at a sudden
turn
Upon the ridge, seeing a raven leap
From a dead lamb that he had picked
all bare.
They said the boy looked scared.

Ina.

I do not wonder.
It was a scene of horror.

Morag.

Yes ; but now
He says that, hearing that wild tramp
of hoofs
Along the rocky path where never
horse
Was known to gallop yet, he started up
Just as she reached the perilous turn o'
the road ;

And he will have it that his sudden
 rising,
 And not the raven, scared the frantic
 brute,
 Whose labouring flanks were white
 with creamy foam,
 And its eyes red with blood, so that
 it made
 The fatal step, and stumbled o'er the
 brink
 Of dark Craig-dhu.

Ina.

It might be so, and yet
 No blame to him.

Morag.

But he will blame himself.
 And then his Mairi is the heir of all
 Her cousin's wealth, and she, he says,
 could never
 Wed him that murdered Doris, nor
 can he
 Touch gold that is so stained with
 blood.

Ina.

Poor lad!
 And what does Mairi say?

Morag.

She sits by him,
 E'en like a patient dove beside its mate
 That lies a-bleeding, croodling softly
 to him,
 And glad to put her heritage away,
 If he will smile again; and that
 he cannot.

Ina.

Ah me! what threads of sorrow
 everywhere
 Run through this tangled life! But
 go now, Morag.
 Here comes my uncle.

[*Exit MORAG and enter DR. LORNE.*

Dr. Lorne.

Ina, it is done,
 The job you wished, and as you
 wished it done;
 Yet a bad job, I fear.

Ina.

Nay, I am sure
 'Tis the right thing, and the right way
 to do it.
 No other way was possible. Does
 he know?

Dr. Lorne.

He knows that, when a search was
 duly made,
 No deed was found such as he had
 supposed,
 And so there is no burden on his land,
 Or claimant for it. It has touched
 his heart
 With some remorseful thoughts about
 that girl.

Ina.

That's as it should be. It is best for us,
 And keeps our hearts the sweeter, that
 the lights,
 Lingering about the grave, are soft
 and tender.
 But he suspects no more — nothing
 behind.

Dr. Lorne.

Nothing. I wish he did. It is
 not right
 This virtue unrewarded, lavishing
 Wealth on a man who writes in
 melting mood
 Of her that wronged him, with no
 recognition
 Of her who set all right. It is too fine
 For my taste. 'Tis as God had done
 his work,
 And let the devil take all the credit
 of it,
 Which God Himself objects to.

Ina.

Yet it could not
Be otherwise, for he's a gentleman,
And could not take a gift like this
from me.

There was no way except to burn
her claim
And yours in the same fire, so
blotting out
That chapter, as it never had been writ.

Dr. Lorne.

I don't know that. He could have
taken you,
And the rest with you. Men are not
so nice
And dainty about marrying money,
when
It is a handsome girl that's freighted
with it.
There was no need to tell him his
good fortune
Till the day after.

Ina.

That is past for ever.

Dr. Lorne.

For ever's not a word for woman's lips,
Nor a man's either. I have sworn it oft,
And every time I swore I had to break
My oath. For Ever — Never, that
belongs
To God alone, who does not change
His mind.

Ina.

Does he return here soon?

Dr. Lorne.

Yes, I suppose so.
He says that he has found that he
can work,
But that he has not found his proper
work:
That's here among his people — not
in London.

I don't know what he means. There's
nothing here
For man to do but shoot and fish
and grumble.

Ina.

Oh, he will find his task in life, and now,
Uncle, you'll take me hence. For
me at least,
There is no work here.

Dr. Lorne.

Whither would you, Ina?

Ina.

Anywhere, anywhere; but away from
this.

Dr. Lorne.

What say you, then, to Italy?

Ina.

Italy!

I never thought of that. Yes! let us go,
And see the picture-galleries and statues,
The Temples of the gods, the
Colosseum,
The towns perched on the hills among
the olives,
The castles, and the ancient civic
grandeur
Of merchants who were princes ruling
states—
All that you oft have told me
about Rome
And Venice and Verona and fair
Florence.
I am so useless, and I wish to learn,
And Italy's a book with many a page
Wondrously written, and illuminate
With golden letters. Yes, we will
go there.

CHORUS.

At fair Ravenna, one day, she was taking
Rest near the wharves where once rose
many a mast,

But now the goats their pasture there
are making,
And the grey sea-waves miles away
are breaking,
As her life too had ebbed far from
its past.

Sadly she gazed on palace, cot,
and tower,
And mused upon the Empire's fading
days,
And on Theodoric and the Lombard
power,
The rush of barbarous peoples, and
the dower
Of beauty that transformed their rude
old ways.

But ever with the thought of these
old ages
Thoughts of a nearer past would
mingle still,
Thoughts of her fruitless work and
empty wages,
And yesterday would write upon
the pages
Of History, and all their margin fill.

And as the yellow bee was drowsily
humming,
And drowsily the convent bells would
ring,
And at a neighbouring lattice one
was strumming
A poor guitar, she knew that he
was coming,
And a new future surely opening.

Nought had she heard of him, or of
his doing,
Yet she was sure that he was near
at hand,
That he came swift as one who
goes a-wooing,
And trembling as an eager soul pursuing
The quest of something he deemed
pure and grand.

"Ina," he whispered, at her feet
low kneeling,
Nor did she startle, only answered low :
"I knew that you had come, I had
the feeling ;
And past is past." And then their
lips were sealing,
Forever now, the love of long ago.

THOUGHTS AND FANCIES FOR SUNDAY EVENINGS

"O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: because His mercy endureth for ever."—Ps. cxviii. 1.

WHY should I always pray,
Although I always lack?
Were't not a better way
Some praise to render back?
The earth that drinks the plenteous rain
Returns the grateful cloud again.

We should not get the less
That we remembered more
The truth and righteousness
Thou keep'st for us in store:
In heaven they do not pray—they sing,
And they have wealth of every thing.

And it would be more meet
To compass Thee with song
Than to have at Thy feet
Only a begging throng
Who take Thy gifts, and then forget
Alike Thy goodness, and their debt.

So give me joyous Psalms,
And Hymns of grateful praise:
Instead of seeking alms,
A song to Thee I'll raise:
Yet still I must a beggar be,
When lauding Thy great charity.

But where shall I begin?
With health and daily bread?

Or cleansing of my sin?
Or light around me shed?
Till I would praise, I did not see
How rich Thy gifts have been to me.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—MATT. v. 8.

ONE thing I of the Lord desire—
For all my way hath miry been—
Be it by water or by fire,
Oh, make me clean.

Erewhile I strove for perfect truth,
And thought it was a worthy strife;
But now I leave that aim of youth
For perfect life.

If clearer vision Thou impart,
Grateful and glad my soul shall be;
But yet to have a purer heart
Is more to me.

Yea, only as the heart is clean
May larger vision yet be mine,
For mirrored in its depths are seen
The things divine.

I watch to shun the miry way,
And stanch the spring of guilty
thought;
But, watch and wrestle as I may,
Pure I am not.

So wash Thou me without, within ;
 Or purge with fire, if that must be ;
 No matter how, if only sin
 Die out in me.

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”—MATT. vi. 28, 29.

LILIES take no care
 How they are to grow,
 How the earth and air
 Cause their flowers to blow ;
 Yet their beauty rare
 Makes a goodly show :
 Solomon in glory bright
 Was not half so fair a sight.

May I therefore lie
 Here, and take mine ease,
 Trusting so to vie
 In growth and grace with these,
 And the Master's eye
 With holy beauty please ?
 Have I only just to be
 What the earth will make of me ?

Lilies have no sin
 Leading them astray,
 No false heart within
 That would them bewray,
 Nought to tempt them in
 Any evil way ;
 And if canker come and blight,
 Nought will ever put them right.

But good and ill, I know,
 Are in my being blent ;
 And good or ill may flow
 From mine environment ;
 And yet the ill, laid low,
 May better the event :
 Careless lilies, happy ye !
 But careless life were death to me.

I must watch and pray,
 I must work and war,
 I must shun the way
 Where temptations are,
 And mend, while yet I may,
 What sin is fain to mar :

If the lamp I do not trim
 Soon it will be fouled and dim.

Yet I will not mope,
 Yet I will not fear,
 But be filled with hope,
 And be of good cheer,
 Ready still to cope
 With the danger near :
 Care, that broods with drooping wing,
 Only broods of care will bring.

“Is not this the carpenter ?”—MARK vi. 3.

ONCE they sought the Cross of shame
 Where He bore the sinner's blame,
 And they battled for the sepulchre
 Made holy by His name ;
 But oh to chance upon
 Some work that He had done,
 The carpenter of Nazareth,
 The Father's only Son !

Were it table, trunk, or stool
 Fashioned by His hand and tool,
 The carpenter of Nazareth
 Who Heaven and earth doth rule,
 'Twere something just to view
 Handiwork He deigned to do ;
 'Twould shed on all our daily tasks
 A glory ever new.

For His work by axe and saw
 Would be all without a flaw,
 Like His patience upon Calvary
 To magnify the law ;
 And the humblest work ye do,
 Let it faithful be and true,
 And be not ye ashamed of it,
 And it will honour you.

Let the Captain of the Host
His deeds of prowess boast,
And Priest and Prophet claim that they
Should be esteemed the most :
But He took the burden great
Of the worker's toil and sweat,
And the carpenter of Nazareth
Did labour consecrate.

Very dear the Cross of shame
Where He took the sinner's blame,
And the tomb wherein the Saviour lay,
Until the third day came ;
Yet He bore the self-same load,
And He went the same high road,
When the carpenter of Nazareth
Made common things for God.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There
is no God."—Ps. xiv. 1.

It is the fashion now for wits to be
Without a God,
Except some Force behind the things
we see,
Like heat or light or electricity ;
And one is odd,
Among these Oracles, who still
believes
In any God that thinks or loves or
grieves.

But there's a spirit, deep in the heart's
core,
Of reverence,
Which somehow will not bow down
to adore
The mightiest force in Nature ; what
is more,
I have a sense
Of being something greater far than
those
Blind makers of the world which
science knows.

Worship I must, but may not worship
aught

Which I can bind
And yoke to do me service, having
caught
The secret of its power, with wonder
fraught,
But without mind ;
And while I comprehend it, I must be
Higher than that which comprehends
not me.

You do not need to worship? May-
be so ;

I judge you not ;
Only, they say, the dog that does
not know
A master, like a savage wolf will grow,
Hating his lot,
And is a sorry brute, until he find
A mightier will than his, and nobler
mind.

And this would be the hapless lot
of men

Without God's fear ;
Their home would soon be as the
wild beast's den,
All the fierce self resuming sway again ;
And we should hear
But cries of wrath or hunger from
the crowd,
Or pæans of self-worship vain and loud.

Save us from that self-worship !

Poor, indeed,
Is he who knows
Nothing more worthy than himself
to lead
His heart to purer thought and
nobler deed
Than ever rose
From his self-contemplation, and
to rouse
The soul to prayers and hymns and
holy vows.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength."
—NEH. viii. 10.

HARK! hark! the joyous lark
Greets the dewy dawn of May;
Hardly has he time to mark
The quivering eyelid of the day,
Ere he springs, with fluttering wings,
In the rapture of the sight;
Ever soaring as he sings,
Till he lose himself in light.

Heart, heart, how slow thou art
With thy morning hymn of praise!
Does the love no joy impart
Which has lit up all thy days?
Why so sad, amid the glad
Sunshine, which is God's and thine?
Oh, the bliss that may be had,
Lost in thoughts of love divine!

Why, oh why, sit still and sigh,
Moping o'er thy former sin,
With the gates of glory nigh
Free for thee to enter in?
Oh rejoice with heart and voice,
Like the bird upon the wing;
They who in the Lord rejoice
Songs of Heaven to earth shall bring.

"He shall go in and out, and find
pasture."—JOHN x. 9.

He led me out and in,
And pasture still I found,
For where He led me
There He fed me,
Although it might seem barren ground.

He led me out and in,
Yet in the frost and cold,
With Him beside me
To cheer and guide me,
My peace was great as in the Fold.

He led me out and in,
From many a hallowed spot
To buying, selling,
Planting, felling,
And yet my spirit fainted not.

He led me out and in,
And if to-day was glad,
While to-morrow
Brought its sorrow,
Yet they both a blessing had.

So lead me out and in:
Thy guidance, Lord, is best;
If Thou chasten
'Tis to hasten
My footsteps to the promised rest.

And in the fold or out,
It shall be well with me
Or in sadness,
Or in gladness,
If only I am still with Thee.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the
same Spirit."—I COR. xii. 4.

Oh to be like my Lord! Yet must I be
Mine own self too,
And to the nature He bestowed on me
Be frankly true.

The olive fruits not as the clustering
vine;
Nor may we get
Scent of the rose or lily from woodbine,
Or violet.

The harp may not give forth the
trumpet's note;
Nor shalt thou bring
From pipe or tabor tones that softly
float
From the harp-string.

False to myself, I were not true to Him;
Nor should I be
More angel, having wings of cherubim
Attached to me.

All creatures have their natural gift
and form
In God's great plan,
And nought will give the grasshopper
or worm
Stamp of a man.

Even as He made me, so I must be
still;
Changed, yet the same,
Holy in heart, and dutiful in will,
And high in aim;

Yet true unto the man that once in me
Was prone to err;
For Faith works not a dull monotony
Of character.

Earth hath not more variety than
Heaven,
Though every one
To whom the grace of glory shall be
given
Be like its sun.

They differ in their glory, star from star,
And in their might,
Yet all their varying robes of splendour are
His borrowed light.

"Commune with your own heart upon
your bed, and be still."—Ps. iv. 4.

BE still, and know He doeth all
things well,
Working the purpose of His holy will,
And if His high designs He do not tell,
Till He accomplish them, do thou
be still.

Why should'st thou strive and fret and
fear and doubt,
As if His way, being dark, must bode
thee ill?

If thine own way be clearly pointed out,
Leave Him to clear up His, and be
thou still.

Was ever yet thy trust in Him mis-
placed?

And hoping in Him, did He not fulfil
The word on which He caused thee
to rest,
Though not as thou had'st thought,
perchance? Be still.

What if the road be rough which
might be smooth?

Is not the rough road best for thee, until
Thou learn, by patient walking in the
truth,

To trust and hope in God, and to
be still?

A little faith is more than clearest
views;

Would'st thou have ocean like a
babbling rill?

God without mystery were not good
news;

Wrestle not with the shadows, but
be still.

Be still, and know that He is God
indeed

Who reigns in glory on His holy hill,
Yet once upon the Cross did hang
and bleed,

And heard the people raging—and
was still.

"Because ye are sons, God has sent forth
the Spirit of His Son into your hearts,
crying, Abba, Father."—GAL. iv. 6.

ABBA, Father! O to think that I,
Not in my pride of mind and vanity,
But by Thy Spirit unto Thee may cry,
Abba, Father!

Too well I know, Lord, that I am
not meet

To get a child's place even beside
Thy feet,

Yet dost Thou hold me close to Thy
heart's beat,

Abba, Father !

Oh help me, while I am a pilgrim here,
Childlike to walk in meekness, love,
and fear,

For this too is Thy house, and Thou
art near,

Abba, Father !

'Tis not in me to guide my ways
aright,

'Tis not in me to quell the Tempter's
might,

But Thou wilt me uphold, and give
me light,

Abba, Father !

Thou hast redeemed me ; living, I
am Thine ;

And dying, also, Thou art ever mine ;
Nothing shall part me from the

love divine,

Abba, Father.

Made one with Jesus, who is one
with Thee

The love that rests on Him o'erflows
on me,

And O the wonder and the mystery !

Abba, Father.

“ Redeeming the time, because the days
are evil.”—Eph. v. 16.

O BARREN fruitless years,
Lean wastes of desert sand—
Could I but water you with tears,
And make you fruitful land !

Oh years that once did reap

A crop of sinful deeds—

Would I might pile them in a heap,
And burn those noxious weeds !

Oh years of grief and pain

That brought me dull despair—

Might I your wine-press tread again,
And find the blessing there !

Oh mingled thread of days,

What have I made of you ?

What garment have I wrought of praise
What robe of honour due ?

Have ye no help in store,

For healing of the mind ?

Or will it mend the road before

To grieve for that behind ?

Though I must bear the blame

Of time misspent and ill,

Let me not clothe myself with shame
By what remaineth still.

“ The spirit indeed is willing, but the
flesh is weak.”—MATT. xxvi. 41.

OFT, Lord, I weary in Thy work,

But of Thy work I do not tire,

Although I toil from dawn till dark,

From matins of the early lark,

Until his even-song expire.

Ah ! who that tends the altar fire,

Or ministers the incense due,

Or sings Thy praises in the choir,

Or publishes good news, could tire

Of that he loves so well to do ?

Sweet is the recompense it brings—

The work that with good-will is done ;

For all the heart with gladness sings,

And all the fleeting hours have wings,

And all the day is full of sun.

And if he labour not in vain,
 If souls are by his message stirred,
 If he can comfort grief and pain,
 Or bring repentant tears like rain
 By force of his entreating word,

The hand may weary at its task,
 And weary he may drag his feet,
 The weary frame may long to bask
 In needful rest ; but do not ask
 The heart to weary of its beat.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”—Ex. xiv. 15.

Lo ! this our marching order still,
 As on that day of God’s great power,
 Forward ! it is the Master’s will,
 The Saviour’s hour.

Go forward, trusting in the Lord,
 New trials will bring mercies new,
 For certain, He that gives the word
 Will go with you.

Behind, the foe is hastening on,
 Eager his purpose to fulfil,
 And Forward safety lies, but none
 In standing still.

Across your path a stormy sea
 Is breaking on a waste of sand ;
 But God’s ways on the waters be
 As on the land.

And thirst and hunger soon shall make
 Your heart, in deserts parched, to sink ;
 Yet there ye from His hand shall take
 Both food and drink.

Forward ! He will be with you there
 Wherever He would have you go,
 And to your fear and your despair
 A path will show.

O look not back, nor hunger for
 The coarse abundance of the Nile ;
 Think rather of the yoke ye bore
 A cruel while.

There is no freedom and no peace
 Except in making progress true,
 And every new stage will increase
 His grace to you.

Forward ! to learn the higher truth
 Through harder tasks of duty done,
 What though the way be rough or
 smooth

If Life be won ?

“The Master is here, and calleth for thee.”—JOHN xi. 28.

THE Master comes, and calls for thee :
 Let Him not wait outside the gate,
 Knocking to get an entrance free,
 For that were but scant courtesy.

It is thyself He fain would meet,
 Not raiment fair, nor braided hair,
 Nor dainty hands, nor sandalled feet,
 Nor features framed His eyes to meet.

Just as thou art, go straight to Him
 In sorrow’s dress of carelessness,
 It will not matter what thy trim,
 Or that thine eyes with tears are dim.

Haste to Him, with thy grieving heart
 And vexèd mind, in Him to find
 Help for the bruised and wounded
 part—
 The mercy of His healing art.

Thou needest Him, He calls for thee,
 For when thy need is worst, indeed,
 He comes in watchful care to be
 The help of thine extremity.

Oh would'st thou strength and comfort
get

Make no delay, but go thy way,
Pour out thine heart to Him, and let
His love be poured out into it.

“Fight the good fight of faith.”—
1 TIM. vi. 12.

THERE where the hosts of darkness lie,
And the brave battle rages high,
Give me my post to live or die
With fearless heart :

Thou, Lord, alone may'st plan the
fight,
Alone array the battle right,
Mine but to do with all my might
My little part.

It may be just to watch and wait,
Like sentinel to keep the gate,
And so outwit the cunning sleight
Of crafty foe ;
Or it may be, 'mid dust and smoke,
To ply the sword with thrust and stroke
Until the bands of sin are broke,
Or lying low.

Perchance 'twill be a humbler post,
Only to serve Thy chosen host
Who fight the battle, never lost,
In strength divine ;
And sword or spear I may not wield,
But travel o'er the stricken field,
And comfort to the wounded yield
Who thirst or pine.

Not mine to choose my work or fate,
Whether to die with hope elate,
Or live the triumph to relate
In after years.
Enough to battle in Thy name,
For truth and right, but not for fame,
And ne'er Thy holy cause ashamed
By coward fears.

And if it be my lot to fall
Unnoticed and unknown of all,
Named only in the great roll-call,
So let it be :
Give me my weapon and my task—
Tumbrel, or sword, or waterflask,
To know my post is all I ask,
And to serve Thee.

“Ye are the light of the world.”—
MATT. v. 14.

LIGHT the lamp that burneth cheery
When the nights are dark and long
And the storm without is eerie
And the household gathers near ye
For work and the tale and song :
In the world are sin and sadness,
Bringing misery and madness ;
Light your home with Christian
gladness.

Light the lamps through all the city,
Twinkling in the crowded street,
Where the foolish and the witty,
And the wretched seeking pity,
And rogues and righteous meet ;
Keep your lights there clearly shining,
Truth and right and love combining,
All the common highways lining.

Light the lamp, oh, keep it blazing,
Where the storm is raging high,
And the shipwrecked soul is gazing
To the clouds that are erasing
All the star-guides in the sky ;
Through the tempest and the terror,
And the darkness and the horror,
Flash the glory from thy mirror.

Were our lights thus shining rightly
In the home and in the street

Through the gloom that cometh
 nightly,
 And our beacons gleaming brightly
 Where perilous breakers beat,
 Little then should men be needing
 All our arguing and pleading,
 With that life-light Godward leading.

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and
 finisher of our faith.”—HEB. xii. 2.

LOOKING unto Jesus,
 Healing I shall find
 For the broken spirit,
 And the bruised mind—
 Yet I gaze on daily,
 Till my eyes grow dim,
 Looking unto any
 Rather than to Him!

Looking unto Jesus,
 I shall learn the road
 That the soul must travel,
 Going home to God—
 Yet I lag and linger,
 Till I scarce can see
 My guide and sweet companion
 Beckoning to me!

Looking unto Jesus,
 I behold the heights
 Gleaming in the glory
 Of Love's undying lights—
 Yet my heart unmoved
 Cares not to aspire,
 Nor for all their splendour
 Would be any higher!

What is it that ails me?
 Why am I so dead
 That looking unto Jesus
 Lifts not up my head?
 And my heart so wanders,
 Caring not to see
 Him, its fount of gladness?—
 Jesus, look on me.

“Wherefore is there a price in the hand
 of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath
 no heart to it?”—PROV. xvii. 16.

Ah! you bring money in your hand,
 Fain to buy wisdom? You are clear
 There's nothing gold will not com-
 mand;

It answereth to all things here;
 And you wish wisdom, as is fit,
 And will not grudge the cost of it.

For you are rich, and you have store
 Of guineas, dollars, and rupees,
 And bonds and shares, that yield you
 more
 Than you can squander well with
 ease.—
 God help you, man! You could not buy
 An ounce of wisdom with them. Try.

Lo! here are books where men have
 found
 Of wisdom many a precious gem;
 And you may have them, gilt and
 bound,
 But not the wisdom wrapt in them.
 Yet buy them, fool: so men have got
 Credit for wisdom they had not.

And likely that is all you want—
 The credit, not the thing itself.
 Then hold your peace, and do not vaunt,
 And you may purchase with your pelf,
 If you have wit your tongue to rule,
 A name for wisdom, though a fool.

There! go your way, and with your
 gold,
 Buy food and raiment, house and land;
 The best things are not bought and
 sold,
 There is no price that will command
 Wisdom, or peace, or love, or health;
 And you are poor with all your wealth.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."—ROM. viii. 28.

LEARN, O my soul, to use
Experience thou hast got,
Nor any thread to lose
God wove into thy lot,
Nor yet to pick and choose
What pleaseth thee or not.

He leads thee by His way,
That thou may'st truly learn;
Gives thee thy work each day,
Thy daily wage to earn;
It is not idle play,
But matter of concern.

The error of thy thought
Had yet some truth to teach;
The sorrow of thy lot
Some wisdom had to preach;
They could not else be brought
So well within thy reach.

There's light wrapt in the cloud,
And heat in frosts and snows,
A voice that speaketh loud
Where silence awful grows,
And life that doth enshroud
Itself in death's repose.

No lesson, then, refuse,
Which love to thee hath given;
If here it find no use
Thou'lt find it yet in heaven;
God's teaching does not lose,
Hid in the heart like leaven.

"Of making many books there is no end."—ECCLES. xii. 12.

ONE writ a plea for Faith, and put
His thoughts into a printed book;
I read it that I might confute
My doubts, and all my faith it shook.

Another and another still
I tried, and all the more I read
The less I could believe, until
A mist of darkness wrapt my head.

They dried up all my Jacob's wells;
They broke the faithful shepherd's rod;
They blurred the gracious miracles
Which are the signature of God.

And hour by hour, and day by day
My heart grew colder than before,
And for one doubt they took away
They left suggestion of a score.

In trouble, then, and fear I sought
The Man who taught in Galilee,
And peace unto my soul was brought,
And all my faith came back to me.

Oh times of weak and wavering faith
That labour pleas in His defence,
Ye only dim Him with your breath:
He is His own best evidence.

"It is good that a man should both hope
and quietly wait for the salvation of the
Lord."—LAM. iii. 26.

SOMETIMES my heart with hope is filled
Full as the summer day with sun,
And eagerly my glebe is tilled,
And strenuous work is done;
Only I fret at all delay,
And fain would haste the expected day
Of fruit, which seemeth far away;
And patience I have none.

Sometimes with patience slow I plod
Through the long hours, from morn
till night,
Complaining not of man or God,
Yet feeling no delight;—

A sodden spirit, bound to cope
With daily toil I may not drop,
But without any heart or hope,
Or any joy or might.

Ah ! hope that hath no patient force
Works in the end but stir and fret,
And hopeless patience runs a course
Of deadness and regret ;
Oh for a Spirit, strong and free,
Fount of a larger life in me,
That waits and works and hopes to see
The great Salvation yet.

"Ye shall leave Me alone : and yet I am
not alone, because the Father is with Me."
—JOHN xvi. 32.

ALONE, to face the Powers of dark-
ness here,
Forsaken of the friends He held
so dear ;
Yet never less alone, for God was near !

So in the waste, dim wilderness at first
His work began, with hunger faint
and thirst,
And the fell Tempter fain to do
his worst.

Lonely His sun rose, lonely too it set,
But round it trailing clouds of glory met,
For God was with Him, and His peace
was great.

Not in the forest grows the noblest tree ;
All highest life a solitude must be,
Apart, with only God for company.

But when forsaken, we are haply thrown
Upon the Father's loving care alone,
And left to lean against the eternal
throne.

How should we fear if He be at
our side ?
Or falter if His face He do not hide ?
Or feel alone if He with us abide ?

"No chastening for the present seemeth
to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless
afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of
righteousness unto them which are exer-
cised thereby."—HEB. xii. 11.

BRIGHT and glad the time has been
When Thou gavest me repose,
Lying on the pastures green
Where the quiet water flows,
While the song-birds filled the air,
And the voice of pain was mute,
And the bloom was passing fair ;
But it yielded little fruit.

Dark and sad the hours have been
In the Valley and Shadow of Death,
Where no light mine eyes have seen
But the far, cold stars of faith,
And my heart, with haunting fears,
Almost sank into despair ;
Yet the harvest of my years
Mostly has been gathered there.

Not where pleasures spring up rife
Do our richest fruits abound ;
But where sorrow of our life
Waters with its tears the ground.
There we learn to look above
For our happiness and peace,
Learn the comfort of Thy love,
And in life and strength increase.

"Where no oxen are, the crib is clean :
but much increase is by the strength of the
ox."—PROV. xiv. 4.

WERE there no oxen feeding in the stall,
The crib were clean :
But without oxen harvest would be
small,
Housekeeping lean :

Wherefore we may not be too prim
and nice ;
There is no good that doth not cost
a price.

Were there no children in the house,
it were
Dainty and trim ;
But without children, lo ! the hearth
were bare
And cold and dim :
Better their laughter than a chamber
neat,
For only in their mirth is home
complete.

Were there no thinking, there would
be no doubt
To vex the heart ;
But life were brutish if it were without
Its thinking part :
And to be Godlike we must risk the
chance
Of doubting much that we believed
once.

Were there no stir among the dry
bones, then
Were there much peace ;
But if the Spirit move not, Death's
dull reign
Would never cease ;
Better fanatic follies than to lie
Cold and unmoved in starched pro-
priety.

Something, I reckon, we have still
to give
In sacrifice
That we may richly grow, and greatly
live ;
And 'tis a vice
To grudge what makes our being
large and full
For the small order of a frigid rule.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust
in Him."—JOB xlii. 15.

Jesus, in the deep, dark night,
Send Thy light to guide my way :
Thou canst give the blind their sight,
Thou canst turn the night to day :
Yet if dark my path must be,
Let me still hold fast to Thee.

Jesus, in the hour of grief,
Send the Comforter to cheer ;
He can give the heart relief,
He can wipe away the tear :
Yet if sorrow be my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not.

Jesus, in the war of life,
Be Thou ever near to save ;
Thou canst shield from perils rife,
Thou canst pluck me from the grave.
Yet if I am doomed to death,
Mine be still the fight of Faith.

Am I abject thus to lie
At His mercy ? surely no :
Did He not in mercy die,
Death for me to overthrow ?
And can I doubt the love which He
Witnessed on His cross for me ?

'Tis the sun that brings the cloud,
Shadows of the light are born ;
Let the clouds and shadows shroud
Life to me in grief forlorn,
Still I know 'twas love that wrought
All the sorrow of my lot.

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Phari-
sees, which is hypocrisy."—LUKE xii. 1.

WHATSOEVER I be or do,
Let me honest be and true ;
Never wear a false pretence,
Never speak with double sense,

Claim a grace I have not got,
Or look the thing that I am not.

Am I common clay at best ?
Be the common clay confessed ;
If for something better fit,
Let me roundly stand to it ;
Saint or sinner, why should I
Ever be a paltry lie ?

Copper cheaply bought and sold,
Pass it not for burnished gold ;
Nor let him that doeth well,
Call himself a child of Hell,
As if falsehoods should be given
In tribute to the God of Heaven.

Hence with oily phrase and smooth !
True men know the ring of truth ;
Think not God can be deceived,
He is only wroth and grieved ;
Play not Publican to be
So much more a Pharisee.

“The Son of Man came not to be
ministered unto, but to minister.”—
MARK x. 45.

Nor to be served, O Lord, but to
serve man

All that I can,
And as I minister unto his need,
Serve Thee indeed :

So runs the law of Love that hath
been given

To earth from Heaven.

What, if the task appointed me be
mean ?

Wert Thou not seen

To gird Thee with the towel, as was
meet,

To wash the feet

Of Thy disciples, whom Thou would'st
befriend

Unto the end ?

For meanest work becomes the noblest
part,

When a great heart,
Pitiful, stoops to comfort our distress,
Or to impress
A sealing kiss on penitence, fresh clad
In raiment sad.

And if the wanderer's feet be soiled
and sore,

So much the more
He needs a tender hand to cleanse
and heal,

And make him feel
There is no task that love will shrink
to do
Life to renew.

“Therefore leaving the principles of
the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto
perfection ; not laying again the founda-
tion of repentance from dead works, and
of faith toward God, of the doctrine of
baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and
of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal
judgment.”—HEB. vi. 1, 2.

LAYING the foundations
O'er and o'er again !—
Calling sinners to repent,
And believe that Christ was sent
To die for love of men ;

Good are the foundations,
But thou shalt do well
To build thereon, by truth and right,
A spacious mansion of delight
Wherein thy soul may dwell.

More than mere foundations
Is the house we need ;
Lay them well, and leave them there,
They hold only cellars where
Life is cramped indeed.

Yet we lay foundations
 O'er and o'er again,
 Making the grand Gospel stale
 By our telling of the tale
 To the sons of men.

On, then, to perfection,
 Truth is infinite ;
 Be not babes with milk content,
 Take the strong meat that is meant
 For the man of might.

Lay not still foundations,
 Seek the higher faith,
 And a larger life to know,
 For the soul that does not grow
 Is not far from death.

"Surely I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—REV. xxii. 20.

I HAVE heard a cry of wailing
 Running through the troubled years,
 As of expectation failing,
 As of sorrow unavailing,
 As of rising doubts and fears.

For the Church is weary, waiting
 'Mid the world's unceasing hum,
 And its scorning and its hating,
 And its fury unabating ;
 And the Lord is slow to come.

Ah ! the thoughtlessness of sorrow !
 Well for us He came not soon,
 Well He cometh not to-morrow,
 Well He lets us wait, and borrow
 Light of many a waning moon.

True, the Church is sighing, weeping :
 But her work, how is it done ?
 Is she well His vineyard keeping ?
 What of harvest is she reaping ?
 Has the world for Him been won ?

And the Virgins, are they waking ?
 Are the Talents growing more ?
 Or the Servants merry-making,
 And of drunken feast partaking,
 While He lingers near the door ?

Was there ever in her story
 Any hour of golden fame
 'Mong the ages, young or hoary,
 When His coming back in glory
 Would not cover her with shame ?

Yet I hear the voice of wailing
 Still above the busy hum,
 As of expectation failing,
 As of sorrow unavailing—
 Ah ! the Lord is slow to come !

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me ?"—PS. cxvi. 12.

WHAT shall I do for all the grace
 and truth
 That I have known
 E'er since the error of a wayward youth
 Led me, alone,
 Forth on a way, alas ! that was
 not good,
 Through bog and quagmire and be-
 wildering wood,
 Where I did seek for bread, and found
 not food,
 Only a stone ?
 Yet mercy compassed me, and left
 me not
 To that scant diet in the desert got.

What shall I do to make up for
 the loss
 Of those bad days,
 When I had turned from Thy redeem-
 ing Cross
 To vain, proud ways
 That made my life a barren land
 of drought,

Wet by no dews, though wrapt in
mists of doubt,
Which left no warmth within, nor
light without,

Nor prayer nor praise?
Yet goodness followed me, and
love divine,
And still Thy Spirit pleaded, Lord,
with mine.

Oh, I can nothing do, but only give
Myself to Thee,
Now to be Thine, whether I die
or live:

And give Thou me
An heart to love Thee, and Thy will
to do,
And strength to walk before Thee
meek and true,
And the great faith that maketh all
things new;

And let me be
True to the consecration and the vow,
Sealed with the sacred baptism on
my brow.

“All my springs are in Thee.”—
Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

ALL the springs of God are found
Here within this hallowed ground.
Founts to quench the thirst within,
Or to cleanse the soul from sin,
Streams of healing to restore
Hearts that have been wounded sore,
Living water making glad
All the weary and the sad.

Whatsoe'er our ailments are,
We have not to travel far
To supply the need of each—
Here to get the dumb their speech,
There restore the blind their sight,
Or the palsied hand its might;
For all springs of God are here
That His glory may appear.

It hath pleased the Father so
To all fulness we should grow,
Where His fulness doth abide
In the Christ, the crucified—
Fulness of our life and health,
Peace and hope and joy and wealth,
That they who on His name do call,
May find in Him their all in all.

“Charity vaunteth not itself.”—I Cor.
xiii. 4.

If I had got the cup,
Which some have had to drain,
Unto the brim filled up
With pleasure or with pain,
I might have done as badly
As they who did the worst;
I might have plunged as madly
Into evil from the first.

Who knows himself, and yet
Will say he could not be
Entangled in the net
Of opportunity?
Or that the storm, assailing
The virtue he achieves,
Would smite it unavailing,
And only rob the leaves?

The ill that one has wrought
Is mostly what is known,
But not the fight he fought,
Or grief he may have shown.
And none are evil wholly,
Or evil all at once;
Lord, keep me meek and lowly,
I wot not what may chance.

“I go a fishing.”—JOHN xxi. 3.

HE had not gone to ply the net
Upon the lake of Galilee,
As he went to Gennesaret
The risen Lord to see.

And as the weary hours crept by
Where once such blissful days he had,
His soul with haunting memory
And misery was mad.

It all came back—the happy past,—
How Jesus once had named him
Rock,
And then the end of all at last,—
The maid and crowing cock.

How could he meet the Master's sight,
Whom he with curses did deny?
Yet if he met Him not that night,
'Twere better he should die.

Then swiftly striding to the shore
He leapt into the swaying boat,
To haul a net, or ply an oar,
And rid him of his thought.

O breaking heart! that sought in toil
The shame and anguish to forget,
Thy Lord was seeking thee meanwhile
To ply thee with His net.

And in our failure and despair,
When hardly we dare think or feel,
Lo! He is looking for us there,
Our aching wounds to heal.

“When I consider Thy heavens, the
work of Thy fingers, the moon and the
stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is
man, that Thou art mindful of him? and
the son of man, that Thou visitest him?”
—Ps. viii. 3, 4.

WHAT am I that there should be
Thought or care in heaven for me,
That the Father's heart should long
To turn my sorrow into song,
Or that Christ should die to win
Such a soul as mine from sin?

What am I? A pigmy form,
Feeble as a poor earth-worm;

Fain to make a little stir
Like the chirping grasshopper:
How should He that ruleth all
Care for anything so small?

Does He measure, then, by size,
Not as we are good and wise?
Is the senseless lump of earth
More to Him than manly worth?
Or the raging of the sea
More than reasoned thought in me?

Nay, such measurement were mean:
He is great whose soul is clean;
He is mighty who has Mind
Nature's Force to loose and bind;
He is worth the saving cross,
Whose death were an eternal loss.

“Quit you like men: be strong.”—
1 COR. xvi. 13.

GIRD your loins about with truth;
Life will not go always smooth,
Singing lightsome songs of youth:
Play the man!

Learn with justice to keep pace,
Spurning what is vile and base,
And bravely ever set your face
To play the man.

Fear not what the world may say,
Hold the strait and narrow way,
In the open light of day.
And play the man.

They will call you poor and weak,
Being merciful and meek:
Heed them not, but stedfast seek
To play the man.

It needeth courage to be true,
And patiently the right to do,
Loving him that wrongeth you—
Play the man!

Trust in God, and let them mock ;
 They will break, as they have broke,
 Like the waves upon the rock—
 Play the man !

“This do in remembrance of Me.”
 LUKE xxii. 19.

WHEN I forget Thee, like a sun-
 parched land
 Which neither rain nor dew from
 heaven hath wet,
 So my soul withers, and I understand
 Wherefore Thou gavest me this high
 command
 Not to forget.

When I forget the death which is
 my life,
 How weak I am ! how full of fear
 and fret !
 How my heart wavers in a constant
 strife
 With mists and clouds that gather
 round me rife,
 When I forget !

Ah, how can I forget ? And yet
 my heart
 By dull oblivious thought is hard
 beset,
 Bred in the street, the meadow, or
 the mart :
 Yet Thou my strength and life and
 glory art,
 Though I forget.

I will remember all Thy Love divine ;
 Oh meet Thou with me where Thy
 saints are met,
 Revive me with the holy bread
 and wine,
 And may my love, O God, lay hold
 on Thine,
 And ne'er forget.

And not to-day alone, but evermore
 Oh let me feel the burden of the debt—
 The load of sorrow that the Master bore,
 The load of goodness that He keeps
 in store,
 And not forget !

“A new commandment I give unto you,
 That ye love one another, as I have loved
 you.”—JOHN xiii. 34.

BIND on me, Lord, the new law given
 To bind and blend the earth with
 heaven,
 And oh that I may love Thee, even
 As Thou hast lovèd me !

They serve Thee best who love
 Thee most,
 They love Thee best who serve the host
 Of weak and erring ones and lost,
 For so Thou lovedst me.

If they reject me and despise,
 If I am hateful in their eyes,
 Let me with kindness them surprise,
 For so Thou lovedst me.

If they be worthless, so was I ;
 And yet for me did Jesus die ;
 Oh let me not the cross deny
 Which proved Thy love to me.

And to the blind it will be sight,
 And to the weak it will be might,
 The love that bringeth health and light,
 As Thine, Lord, did to me.

“Out of the depths have I cried unto
 thee, O Lord.”—Ps. cxxx. 1.

O HEART, my heart, that burdened art
 and breaking
 With sharp remorse
 For faithlessness and failure, and
 forsaking

Of the right course !
Heart, O my heart,
In sorry plight thou art.

O heart, my heart, that hardly dares
remember
Thy guilty past,
Or look into full many a secret chamber
Thou had'st locked fast !
Yet heart, my heart,
They were but closed in part.

O heart, my heart, thy sin might be
forgotten,
But could not hide ;
He knoweth what is sound, and what
is rotten
With lust or pride.
Heart, O my heart,
Yet will it sting and smart.

O God, my God, wilt Thou forgive
a sinner
Such deep offence,
So near his end, and yet but a beginner
In penitence ?
God, O my God,
Send healing with Thy rod.

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”
—MATT. x. 8.

LORD, there is nothing I can give
Which Thou hast not ;
For all from Thee I did receive,
Which I have got ;
And even the very life I live
Thou did'st allot :
How could I grudge to give Thee back
The overflow I do not lack ?

Thine are the silver and the gold,
The treasure Thine ;
They are a trust for Thee I hold,
They are not mine ;

And oh, if they might help to mould
The life divine !
What higher honour could they meet
Than to inlay the Mercy-seat ?

There is no price for what is best,
It is not bought ;
Who would in heavenly things invest
Gets them for nought,
And debtor unto Thee must rest,
Or have them not ;
But though Thy mercies be not sold,
Yet we may serve Thee with our gold.

So let us bring it to the Lord,
For it is His ;
And that corrupteth which we hoard,
And wasted is ;
But truly, well, and safely stored,
When it can bless
The sick, and poor, and weak oppressed,
And bring unto the weary rest.

“I have glorified Thee on the earth :
and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.”—
JOHN xvii. 4, 5.

He spake without one shade of guilt
or blame
To touch His heart with penitence
or shame ;

“My Father, I have glorified Thy
name,

Now glorify Thou Me.”
No lips but His a word like that
might dare,
So meek and bold, so free from doubt
and care ;
God spake to God, and yet he spake
in prayer,
As none might pray but He.

Ah ! well for us that He could justly
plead
In this high strain, and claim as right-
ful meed

The glory due to perfect word and deed,
 And tried, yet sinless thought ;
 For in His friends He would be paid
 His debt,
 And on their heads He would this
 glory set ;
 But for Himself, it was a nobler yet—
 A crown of thorns—He sought.

We look back from the verge of life,
 and see
 Error and failure, sin and misery ;
 And we can only cry, ah ! woe is me !
 Be merciful, O God !
 But now we dare pray, glorify Thy Son,
 Crown the meek Victor who the fight
 hath won,
 There are a thousand crowned in
 crowning One
 Who bore our heavy load.

“Not the hearers of the law are just
 before God, but the doers of the law shall
 be justified.”—ROM. ii. 13.

OH we boast us of our law,
 Glory in our gospel light,
 Pity those who cannot draw
 Fresh the living water bright ;
 We are favoured, we are blest,
 We have heard the joyful sound,
 We are sons of God confessed,
 We are free who once were bound ;
 Bless the Lord who unto us
 Is in mercy plenteous.

Ah ! but what if we are still
 Walking on in sinful ways,
 Keeping a rebellious will,
 Lusting for the world's poor praise ?
 What, if we are growing old,
 None the wiser for the rod ?
 What if we have faith in gold,
 Not in either man or God ?

Shall we praise the Lord that we
 Have nor faith nor charity ?

Not the hearer of the word,
 But the doer, he is just.
 He who, knowing not the Lord,
 Keepeth yet his soul from rust,
 He who doeth what is right,
 Bravely stands by what is true,
 Faithful to his inner light,
 Dark although it seem to you—
 He is nearer God than they
 Who know the truth, and disobey.

“Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”—
 PS. xix. 12.

AH me ! the secret sin
 That lurks and works within
 The fair, false heart which gives it
 willing room !
 How sure it bringeth blight,
 Like nipping frost by night
 That withers in the spring its early
 bloom !

Oh hidden, cherished lust,
 Like a small speck of rust
 On the sheathed sword—known but
 to God and me ;
 What if the weapon good
 Unto the sheath be glued
 On battle day, and I am shamed by
 thee ?

Oh cleanse it from my heart,
 And let me play my part
 And put away what Thou would'st
 take away ;
 Leave not the sharp-toothed moth
 That is devouring both
 The garment and the soul it doth
 array.

"Truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."—HEB. xi. 15, 16.

Nor one regretful look behind
 Lord, would I cast,
 Nor hanker with a faithless mind
 For the dead Past:
 Who would recall the troubled night
 When joying in the morning light?

Not back again, not back again
 To that old road
 So haunted by the fear of men,
 No fear of God—
 The hungry wilderness of self,
 Whose love was the base love of pelf!

Forward, my way lies forward still,
 To get release
 From sinful stain, and wayward will,
 And find the peace
 Where flesh with spirit shall agree,
 And God shall not be shamed in me.

My work is here, but not my rest,
 And not my home,
 And not the wealth I would invest
 For life to come;
 I have my treasures hid above,
 And usury of faith and love.

And if to-night mine inn be good,
 I shall be glad;
 But if to-morrow's fare be rude,
 And lodging bad,
 It shall be so much easier then
 To strike my tent, and on again.

But never backward may I look,
 Or feel regret
 That I the way of sin forsook,
 And heavenward set
 My face to find the life in God,
 And comfort of His staff and rod.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."—COL. iii. 1.

HIGHER still, and higher!
 Oh to leave the clouds below,
 And the creeping mists that throw
 Doubt on all the way we go
 As we would aspire
 Higher still, and higher!

Higher still, and higher!
 Ah! how little way I make,
 Plunging where the black bogs quake,
 Slowly hewing through the brake
 Tangled with old briar!—
 Higher still, and higher!

Higher still, and higher!
 Courage! look not down to see
 How high thy footing now may be,
 Upward set thy face where He
 Calls thee to come nigher,
 Higher still, and higher.

Higher still, and higher!
 Lo! the sun is sinking fast,
 And lengthening shades are round thee
 cast.
 Let not thy heart fail at the last;
 'Tis no time to tire—
 Higher still, and higher!

Higher still, and higher!
 Sweet the air is, pure and clear,
 And the Lord is ever near
 Yonder where the songs I hear
 And the golden lyre—
 Higher still, and higher.

Higher still, and higher !
 What, if Death be standing right
 In thy way, and dreadful night ?
 All beyond is life and light,
 And thy soul's desire—
 Higher still, and higher !

“How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O
 Lord of hosts.”—Ps. lxxxiv. 1.

DEAR to me the Church of Christ,
 Sweet the memories lingering there,
 Sweet the place of solemn tryst,
 Sweet the house of prayer,
 Where the glory ever pours
 Through the everlasting doors.

Solace of the spirit vexed,
 Refuge of the contrite heart,
 Helper of the mind perplexed
 Evermore thou art :
 Oh that I might always dwell
 Where I hear Thy Sabbath bell !

There they brought me when a child
 For the cleansing of the Lord ;
 There I came with garment soiled
 Of mine own accord,
 Broken in my pride of strength,
 Weary of the world at length.

Not the tinted lights that shine
 Softly through the pictured pane,
 But the light of love divine
 Flooding all thy fane,
 That is what entrances me,
 Hushed in its high mystery.

Not the word the preacher speaks
 Pleading in his Master's name,
 But the still small Voice that seeks
 Wayward hearts to tame,
 That is what I love to hear,
 Then I know that God is near.

“Her house is the way to hell, going
 down to the chambers of death.”—Prov.
 vii. 27.

HAST thou wandered far, my child ?
 Whither did'st thou go,
 That thy feet are so defiled,
 And thy pace so slow ?
 Hast thou been among the wild
 Mountains and the snow ?

Mountain steep and snows were sweet
 For me to tread again ;
 But I've been on the stony street,
 Among the haunts of men ;
 Better to have put my feet
 Within the lion's den.

In the haunts of men are found
 Kind and loving hearts,
 Wisdom springing from the ground,
 All entrancing arts,
 Homes that do with peace abound,
 Songs in many parts.

Nay, but beauty at the door
 Called me to come in
 Where the vine-blood stained the floor,
 And the song was sin ;
 And another victim more
 Perished so within.

But thou hast returned at last,
 Sad and penitent ;
 Snaky arms hast from thee cast,
 All their power is spent :
 'Twas an evil dream, the Past ;
 Wake up innocent.

Ah ! the Past still cleaves to me
 With a leprous force—
 Tainted thought that will not be
 Cleansed out by remorse ;
 And the goodness that I see
 Makes the anguish worse ;

"Thy kingdom come."—MATT. vi. 10.

Thy Kingdom come—the reign of
truth and right,
Where lies, amazèd at the search-
ing light,
Creep back into the darkness out
of sight:

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Kingdom come, when Thou shalt
reign alone,
With all the graven gods of stock
or stone,
Like broken potsherds strewn around
Thy throne:

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Kingdom come, when wrath and
war shall cease
And swords be reaping-hooks for tasks
of peace,
And love shall rule, and wisdom
shall increase:

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Kingdom come, when all shall
do Thy will,
And gladly haste Thy purpose to
fulfil,
And faith take meekly all life's good
and ill:

Thy Kingdom come.

The Kingdom come, where peace and
pity meet,
And let Thy folk who know Thy
mercy-seat
Like pity show to those who them
entreat:

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Kingdom come, Lord, in this
heart of mine,
Set there Thy throne, and reign in
right divine,
And make me wholly true, and
wholly Thine:
Thy Kingdom come.

"Willing rather to be absent from the
body, and to be present with the Lord."—
2 COR. v. 8.

Waiting for the day to dawn,
Peering through the darkness far,
Here and there a cloud withdrawn,
Here and there a star.

Dark and silent is the hour,
Not a whispering wind is heard,
Not an insect in a flower,
Not a twittering bird.

Long the night has been and slow,
Spite of good, remembered words,
And my heart is faint and low
With the loosening cords.

Who is with me? Only Thou,
Thou, my never-failing Friend:
Lay Thy hand upon my brow,
Hold it to the end.

Lo! is that a gleam of morn
Touching yonder trailing cloud,
White and ghostly and forlorn,
Pallid as a shroud?

Yet within that cloud there lie
All the glories of the day—
Light, and life, and song; and I
Long for them and pray.

So I wait with failing strength,
Give me, Lord, the grace I need,
That I yet may die at length
•Into life indeed.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—JOHN v. 17.

Bid me not look in heaven for only
rest,
Well-earned because the battle has
been won.
My fight has been a poor one at
the best,
And now I trust to have it better done
Where never sets the sun.

What need of rest, except to be
refreshed
For further work, and carry on our
task,
No more with sin enfeebled and en-
meshed?
Eternal idleness I do not ask,
Nor in such bliss could bask.

So many failures I have made on earth,
So many hours have wasted of
my day,
So little gained of true abiding worth,
So oft have erred, and gone so far
astray
From the one Living Way!

Oh to redeem the time that I have lost,
To right whatever wrong I may have
done,
To publish peace unto the tempest-
tossed,
To bring back hope to some despair-
ing one,
Until there shall be none!

Who knows? The Father worketh
hitherto,
And Christ, whom I would serve in
love and fear,
Went not away to rest Him, but to do
What could be better done in heaven
than here,
And bring to all good cheer.

And I would work with Him whose
mercy lasts
For ever, and His love is everywhere,
Who preached to spirits in prison, and
daily casts
His nets where souls are sinking
in despair:
My heaven were with Him there.

Perchance, in that new life we shall
be born
Children at first, and have to slowly
grow,
And its unfathomable wonders learn,
Like children, singing gladly as we go
Where living waters flow.

Yet must we come to manhood's
better hour,
And have our work appointed us
to do,
And do it with more heart, and hope,
and power,
And fresh as with eternal morning dew
That doth our life renew.

At any rate, to sit with folded palms
On listless thrones, with crowns of
shining gold,
Or touch the harp unto the voice of
psalms,
With hearts that are to sinners hard
and cold,
Is not the hope I hold.

"If it were not so, I would have told
you."—JOHN xiv. 2.

OH, are they near to us or far away?
And know they how our eyes grow
dim with tears?
And can they hear what breaking hearts
here say,
Our dead who sleep through all the
waiting years?

Not vain the task to sweep the ocean's floor, Or sift the slag and cinders of the moon, Tell what the sun for fuel has in store, Or when eclipse shall darken it at noon :	Thou would'st have told us had it not been so, Thou wilt not let us yearn for some dear face, Or voice remembered fondly long ago, To make Thy heaven to us a lonely place.
But dream not thou the great sealed stone to roll From the grave's mouth, and to light up its gloom, Or to unwrap the cerements of the soul, And search the close-kept secret of the tomb.	Oh rich in hope the things which Thou hast told, Rich too the hope of what Thou hast concealed ; And having faith in Thee, Lord, I would hold The hope unspoken as the hope revealed.
They may be far away—I cannot tell— And nothing of my grief can hear or see ; They may be near me, holden by a spell Which, hard on them, will yield no help to me.	“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, prayers be made for all men.”—1 TIM. ii. 1. O'ER land and sea love follows with fond prayers Its dear ones in their troubles, griefs, and cares ; There is no spot On which it does not drop this tender dew, Except the grave and there it bids adieu, And prayeth not.
But near or far, the spirit is ensphered Alone and silent, till it find again A body, and appear as it appeared When its haunts were among the sons of men.	Why should that be the only place uncheered By prayer, which to our hearts is most endeared, And sacred grown ? Living, we sought for blessings on their head ; Why should our lips be sealed when they are dead, And we alone ?
Yet Thou that art the Lord of death and life, Wilt Thou not clothe them with familiar frames, That we may know beloved friend or wife, And clasp their hands, and call them by their names ?	Idle ? their doom is fixed ? Ah ! who can tell ? Yet, were it so, I think no harm could well Come of my prayer :
Changed as Thou wert, Thy friends discovered Thee By the nail-prints and by the wounded side ; And Thou wilt leave some mark on us that we Amid the glory may be verified.	

And oh the heart, o'erburdened with
its grief,

This comfort needs, and finds therein
relief

From its despair.

Shall God be wroth because we love
them still,

And call upon His love to shield
from ill

Our dearest, best,

And bring them home, and recompense
their pain,

And cleanse their sin, if any sin remain,
And give them rest?

Nay, I will not believe it. I will
pray

As for the living, for the dead each day.

They will not grow

Less meet for heaven when followed
by a prayer

To speed them home, like summer-
scented air

From long ago.

Who shall forbid the heart's desires
to flow

Beyond the limit of the things we
know?

In heaven above

The incense that the golden censers
bear

Is the sweet perfume from the saintly
prayer

Of trust and love.

A HERETIC

AND OTHER POEMS

A HERETIC

YES, he was there at the grave,
 and we
 Eyed each other with meaning look,
 Wondering what he had come to see;
 Yet we pitied him, too, ere long, as he
 Stood by himself alone, and shook
 While the earth fell dull on the
 coffin lid.
 But why had he come where he was
 not bid?
 He might have known he would mar
 our meeting,
 Who neither its love nor its grief
 could share.
 And how could we give him a word
 of greeting?—
 He! the last man that we looked for
 there.
 So, lonely and silent he took his place,
 And silent and lonely he went
 his way.
 But what was the shadow that lay on
 his face?
 Was it, maybe, some touch of the
 tender grace,
 And the lingering love of a former
 day?
 It puzzled us then; but we let him go
 Lonely away, with his head bent low.
 They had been friends in youth,
 had read

Together the words of the classic
 dead—
 Epic and drama and lyric bold,
 And sage discourse of the wise
 and true,
 And the fabled tale, and the legend old
 Where the faiths of a rank religion
 grew;
 And many a close-writ notebook told
 How well the past life of the world
 they knew,
 How much of the gods and the wits
 of Greece,
 And of Rome with its arts of war
 and peace.
 Oft wandering, too, by brake and
 brook,
 Or seated on lichened boulder stone,
 They read as in an open book
 How earth was fashioned, and rocks
 had grown,
 By frost and ice, by fire and flood,
 From the weltering slime of the
 primal mud;
 And what the records of nature bore
 Of the struggle of Life from less to
 more—
 What mosses in the swamps grew rank,
 What fishes stirred the long sea-weeds,
 What great beasts on the river's bank
 Went crashing through the giant reeds.
 So they had searched, through ages vast,
 The strange graveyards of the buried
 Past.

Later, their converse had mostly been
With Fathers and Schoolmen and
knotty Creeds,
And Councils, where subtlest wits
were seen

Busily sowing the fruitful seeds
Of faith and doubt, and love and hate,
And all that chequers our mortal fate.
The fall too of Empire, the dark
sunset

Of learning, through lust of power and
gold,
The mighty Popes, and the mightier
yet

Who wrought reform in the days of old.
And martyr-sorrows by fire and cord,
And the glory and triumph of God's
pure Word;

These, too, they pondered, laying
up store

Of late born science and old world lore.
So had the Kirk for her sons designed
That the rich in faith should be full
in mind.

They settled near each other,—*this*,
In a rural parish of easy bliss,
That, in a neighbouring city, rife
With the questionings of a keen
young life—

They walked together side by side,
And each of the other would speak
with pride :

How one had treasures of learning vast,
And one had thoughts that were sure
to cast

A larger light upon life and death,
And gird up the loins of our dwindling
faith.

Brothers first in the toils of youth,
Brothers now in the bonds of truth,
Each in the other was fain to see
The powers of the world that was to be.

But one man like a tree shall stand,
Leafing and fruiting year by year,

And cling to his little patch of land,
And cast a shade for the lazy steer,
With no more change than the passing
breeze

Makes when it tosses the creaking
bough ;

And prosperous, plentiful, full of ease,
To-morrow he shall be the same as now.

Another shall flow like a freshening
stream,

Flashing there where the sunbeam flies,
Eddying here in a brooding dream,
And all its life in its movement lies ;

This the law of his being strange,
Ever he grows by flux and change.

What would you? Nature will have
her way ;

Will mend by night what you mar
by day,

And laughs at the man that would say
her Nay.

Tree cannot pluck up its roots and go,
Restless stream cannot cease to flow,
Each must obey the high Law, given
To the things of earth by the Lord
of Heaven.

And some read many books, and grow
Wiser and better by all they know ;
From thoughts of other men their own
Get warmth and colour and richer tone,
And what is old they make as new
From the shaping mind it passes
through :

It was but a seed when it was sown,
But a goodly plant in their souls has
grown,

For all that they gather with patient
strife

Is penetrated with mystic life.
Another shall read and heap up lore,
Yet be no wiser than ever before ;
Folios mighty he knows by rote,
And each edition, its date, and size,
Page and paragraph well can quote,
And where a word on the margin lies ;

Hardly a question up shall spring,
 Sudden as startled bird on wing,
 But a loaded sentence is up to sight
 With a score of quotations to settle
 it right ;
 Yet never a thought of his own has he,
 Nor any mind but memory.

So these twain took their several ways,
 Though each was full of the other's
 praise,
 Keeping ever a constant heart,
 While drifting more and more far
 apart.
 For he whom we laid in the grave
 that day—
 Honoured and wept for his service—
 learned,
 By change and sorrow, the sacred way
 Which the dull, slow book-worm
 never discerned.

He had come among us in brilliant
 youth,
 Eloquent, earnest, eager to tell
 Just the old story we held for truth,
 And we praised him for it, and liked
 him well ;
 Praised the round periods shaped
 with care,
 And the brilliant tropes that he did
 not spare,
 And liked the man and his modest air.
 Praised him and liked him ! What
 would he more ?
 Welcome his knock at the cottage
 door,
 Welcome at school to the children gay,
 Welcome his presence at wedding feast,
 Welcome where sickness restless lay,
 Welcome as Comforter, Prophet and
 Priest—
 What would he more than already
 he had ?
 And why should his countenance now
 be sad ?

Say, you are set to pasture sheep—
 Taught where the short, sweet grasses
 grow,
 And the tender ewes and the lambs
 to keep
 From the wily fox and the hooded crow,
 And how to shift them from hill
 to dale,
 And how to bring healing to them
 that ail,
 And when to fold them, and feed
 them well
 While the snow lies deep upon field
 and fell.
 And so you tend them with care,
 and they
 Trust your shepherding, as you strive
 To keep them safe in the good
 old way—
 But somehow or other they do
 not thrive ;
 They do not grow as they ought
 to grow,
 But pine where the quiet waters flow ;
 And many are ailing, and none grow
 fat—
 Could you be well content with that ?
 Nay, you are not there to be liked
 and praised,
 But to see that the sheep are fitly grazed.

Or say that you go a-fishing, well
 Equipt with a handy rod and reel,
 And the temptingest flies that ever fell,
 Like light, where the rippling waters
 steal,
 And you know all the likely casts
 and pools,
 And to ply your art by the latest rules.
 Could you be satisfied now to see
 Shoals come sniffing about your hooks,
 As it were a pleasure for them to be
 Playing there, in the shining brooks,
 With the golden wings and the
 scarlet dyes
 Of all those beautiful summer flies,

If never a speckled trout would touch
The dainty things that they liked
so much ?

Greatly our Shepherd, then, we
admired,
And greatly his fishing-craft we praised;
But that was not what his heart desired,
And therefore with sorrowing eyes
he gazed

Round and down on the thronging pews,
As one who had failed in telling
his news.

For our life went on as it did before,
Heaping up treasures from less to more,
Seeking our pleasure, and serving
our sins,

And giving our honours to him that wins.

And so he began to ask, "What next?
Can I spend my years on a fruit-
less task ?

My soul is weary and sore perplexed,
Will God not give me the boon I ask ?
Better go plough a straight furrow,
and reap,

Better the broom of as crosing-sweep,
Labour of any kind one can see

Good coming out of, than this for me."
Some would have laid all the blame
on the flock,

And called their hearts hard as a
flinty rock ;

But that was never his way ; for he
Searched himself and his work, to find
What might the cause of his failure be,
And whether it were in his heart
or mind.

Was it the good news of God he
had spoken ?

Was it the true Bread of life he
had broken ?

And the Christ he had preached, was
He God's own Son ?

Or only the Christ whom the school-
men spun,

Part of the earth, and part of the air,
From the small fine threads of their
logic bare ?

Now came a season of deep unrest,
Of teaching thought to be lame
and halt,

And meetings of elders with minds
oppressed,

And meddling of ministers finding fault.
For the fight he was fighting all the
week through,

As the Sabbath came round, he must
fight it anew ;

And now it went this way, now it
went that,

Till we hardly could tell what he meant
to be at ;

But we felt he was real, and groping
about

In search of a Faith that he had to
find out.

Slowly the light came ; slowly it grew ;
Not without questionings, Could it
be true ?

And faint heart-misgivings, What might
be the end ?

Must he lose for the sake of it lover
and friend ?

Sometimes resisting it when it seemed
clearest,

Sometimes afraid of it when it
felt dearest,

Sometimes persuaded it could not
be right,

Else the saints nearest God would
have glowed in its light ;

And sometimes defiant and scornful, he,
As one who knew what the cost
must be,

Hurled it at us, and went his way,
To kneel in his closet, and weep
and pray.

But he settled at last in the lucent calm
Of a restful faith which was sweet as
a Psalm—

Calm and sweet as the waters blest
Where the Good Shepherd causeth
His flock to rest.

At first we heard him with grow-
ing fear.

Was he hitting indeed at our cherished
beliefs?

Was he sapping the truth, to our
fathers dear?

Was he shooting heretical arrows
in sheafs?

Was he driving shafts through the
Catechism

To undermine our old Calvinism?

Some held it was only the truth
he sought,

Truth which at any price must
be bought:

And some, that he ne'er should have
come to preach

If he had not already the truth
to teach.

And so, at each fireside the battle raged
Which he with himself in anguish
waged;

And we searched the Book, and we
gathered store

Of other books, and we deemed
them good,

Not for the wealth of their learned lore,
But for help that they gave us in
living more

Nobly and truly, as Christians should;
That was his test for every thought,
Will it lift you up nearer to God
or not?

Oh, that was a springtime of sowing
seed—

Seed of the better life surely—
for mind

Was quickened by him, and the soul
was freed

From dead traditions that bind and
blind;

It was a time too of tears and prayers,
And bearing of crosses by high
and low;

If the enemy also sowed his tares,
He warned us well that it must be so.

In the end, when his way at length
was clear,

And the light shone quietly forth in
power,

And he came to us speaking good
words of good cheer

That dropt on our souls like a
summer shower,

How we waited for Sunday then,
eager to listen

To a message that made the heart
glow and eye glisten!

Oh, the hush of the multitude, breath-
less and still,

As their souls bowed before him, and
moved at his will!

Meanwhile, his friend in his rural home
Read many a clasped, white-vellumed
tome,

Black-lettered, and with red-edged
leaf,

And never a sentence clear and brief.

Mickle he read, but little he grew;

A dwarf in giant's armour he;

And all that was old he held for true,

And all that was new must error be;

Fresh lights indeed on the earth
might shine,

But nothing fresh upon things divine;

And little he heeded the voice
which said,

I am living, and these are dead.

Then some came to him, whispering,
"Lo!

The hour is come, and the man we
know.

The friend of thy youth has gone
astray

From the beaten path of the narrow
way,

And leadeth others to do likewise,
 As there are always silly sheep
 Will follow the bell-wether, when
 he tries
 O'er his own shadow in vain to leap.
 That which the Fathers held for truth
 In the faith-sure days of the Church's
 youth,
 That which divines at a later stage,
 With the learning ripe of a thoughtful
 age,
 Fashioned into a Creed compact,
 Every link of it strong as fact,
 Every joint of it fitting tight
 As Scripture and Reason could shape
 them right—
 That, like another blind Samson, he,
 Making sport for the Philistine,
 Would fain pull down on our heads,
 that we
 May die like men crushed in a falling
 mine.
 But now is the harvest come at last
 Of all thy sowing of fruitless seed ;
 God has been guiding thee in the
 past
 To help His Church in her hour of
 need.
 He is thy friend, and dear to thee,
 But not so dear as the Truth should
 be ;
 Up, then, and gird thine armour on,
 Or take thy sling and the pebble
 stone,
 And smite this giant of carnal doubt.
 The Church must deal with him ; but
 without
 The lore of the ages, known to thee,
 Hardly her way shall be plain to see ;
 For the critical, carping spirit abroad
 Lies ever in wait for the Church's
 tripping,
 If she miss but a turn of the changing
 road,
 Or a chance wrong word from her
 mouth come slipping,

And they scoff and mock, and flee
 and flout
 If a date be wrong, or a jot left
 out.
 Heaven trained thee for this task.
 And see,
 There is glory and honour awaiting
 thee,
 When the true champion of the
 faith
 Has stricken this heresy unto death.”

 They were not many - thoughted
 men,
 Nor wise at winning souls, but yet
 Fitly and well they reasoned then
 To snare this soul in their wily net ;
 And this was how the leaven wrought
 As he sat down by the fire, and
 thought—
 “How can I do it? He is my
 friend,
 Tender and true, and a saintly spirit,
 Living, by work and prayer, to
 mend
 The ills and woes that we all inherit.
 They'll call me a Balaam, a Judas,—
 what not ?
 If I meddle with that which concerns
 me not.
 Yet should not a warning word be
 spoken,
 Even at the risk of a friendship
 broken ?
 Can I in faithfulness let him go
 Unrebuked in his erring way,
 Marring the ancient doctrine so,
 And leading others, too, far astray ?
 'Tis pleasant to find my work at
 last
 Appreciated as it should be ;
 And what if, indeed, through the
 busy Past,
 God for this has been training me ?
 So they read it as men of sense,
 Skilled in the ways of Providence.

It is right to do what the Church
requires,
And to tend the flame of her altar
fires,
How painful soever, then, I must
speak;—
And, besides, he is clearly all wrong
in his Greek.”

Followed a sharp Remonstrance,
charged
With high authorities, and enlarged
With customary polemic hits—
The shallow trick of barren wits—
As “love of novelty—fickle mind—
Failure of logic, if beauty of art—
Hunger for fame of the emptiest
kind—

Itch of vanity in the heart—
Knowledge that had not a touch of
grace,
Not accurate either, and out of
place.

You know the style; it was commoner
once
Than it is to-day, when the learned
dunce

Is of little account. As he read the
“proof,”

Though he knew how unkindly his
words must seem,

Like a pigeon perched on a high
house-roof,

He crooned and swelled in a vain
fond dream

Of all the honours that he should
win,

When scholars his learned volume
read,

And the wealth of praise that it might
bring in,

And the name that should live when
he was dead;

But he did not remember the love
he lost—

The broken seal of the Holy Ghost.

One word only he spoke out plain,
But that word measured the bulk of
his brain :

“That Aorist, now; he is clearly
wrong;

I have touched him there, and my
point is strong.”

For the faith and the hope of men,
he wist.

All hinged on the turn of an Aorist.

Remonstrance led to Rejoinder, of
course,

Deftly handled with point and force,
And equal learning and dainty wit,

And there was not an unkind word
in it.

“Pleasant,” he writ, “was a quiet
life

Spent among big-margined folio
books,

Far from the town with its busy
strife,

’Mid the singing of larks, and the
cawing of rooks;

And well for his friend to have
lettered ease,

For the Church to have scholars ripe
and good,

Though it is not for any themselves
to please,

And sit in brown study, and dream
and brood,

Fighting the battles of long ago
With ghosts that are wandering to
and fro,

When they ought of rights to be
lying low.

For himself, his task had been plainly
set

Where the eager throng in the market
met,

And the rush of thoughts into men’s
vexed minds

Was borne like the dust on the wild
March winds,

And would not be settled by tense
or mood,
Or aught that the nice grammarian
could.
He must serve his time, for he did
not think
God had mistaken the time of day,
And set him forth, like an owl to
blink
At noon instead of the evening grey ;
But to look in the face of man, and
see
What was aching his heart and brow,
And where the shadow of Mystery
Lay on the face of the dial now.

"Fresh lights had shone upon earth
and heaven,
And time had its ancient secrets given
Up to our search, from the earth and
stone
That held the story of Babylon.
Not now could any one wholly read
The truth aright, if he gave no heed
To that which the Fathers could not
know—
The lights which out of the ages grow.
And ere the brief hours of his day
were run,
He would like to feel that his task
was done
With clear intelligence of the time,
Wasting nothing on mere by-play,
But filling his place in the plan sublime
God worked out in His own great
way.
Others might come to mend it soon,
To-morrow a different work might
need,
Men must change with the changing
moon,
And life be sung to another tune,
And shape itself to a larger Creed.
Faith in God was the only way,
And there was no last word on that
to say.

"What have I done? I have only
told
My flock of the boundless love of God,
Which is not straitened, but doth enfold
All that on earth have their abode,
All in the Universe that dwell
In the heights of heaven, or the depths
of hell ;
For there is no shore where that ocean
breaks
And finds its limit : God is not there
Where Love is not, that our burden
takes ;
For God is love, and is everywhere.
And I told them, that God and His
grace and work
Are not tied fast to a Bishop's crook,
Are not shut up in an ordered kirk,
Nor yet bound up in a printed book,
For all good thoughts that visited them,
All longings for the pure and true,
All from His inspiration came ;
And there was not an erring soul
but knew
The pleading tones of the Father's love
Calling—calling him from above.
And I taught moreover that they who
hear,
And turn from the evil of their ways,
Shall find that His mercy is ever near,
And sing to Him yet in a song of
praise ;
For among the living, among the dead,
Yesterday, to-day, and for ever,
He is still the same, as the Spirit said,
Pouring forth love as a flowing river.
Is it heresy to have taught them so ?
I glory in it, and ever must,
Ever with Christ my faith must go,
When He seeks the living to make
them just,
Or joins the dead where they lie in
dust ;
For He must be doing His Father's
will,
Bearing the message of mercy still."

Process of heresy then began,
 And who but his ancient friend was fit,
 Since the heretic too was a learned
 man,
 With competent knowledge to handle
 it?
 Oh they were grieved, for well they wot
 The man was good, and the work
 he did;—
 A saintly spirit in deed and thought,
 Though he plainly taught what the
 Church forbid :
 But never a heresy yet had thriven
 But what some holy man had given
 A tone to it that appeared from
 Heaven.
 It was all the worse for the Church,
 they said,
 When a man of God from the old
 paths broke ;
 But there was little to fear or dread,
 When the heretic was like other folk.

 Weekly they met in hot debate,
 And weekly they preached on the
 business too,
 Daily also, and early and late,
 We all debated the case anew.
 Never such stir was known in the
 place ;
 Never such searching of chapter and
 verse ;
 Never such talk of election and grace,
 Never such arguments clear and terse ;
 Never such stores of theology, brought
 From hiding-places in old men's heads,
 Never such troubled and anxious
 thought,
 As we walked by the way, or lay still
 in our beds,
 To think of the man, that we held
 so dear,
 Badgered as if he were fool or rogue :
 But at length, in the cold dark end of
 the year,
 They cast him out of their synagogue.

I was there on that chill December
 night
 When they gave their verdict, and
 spake his doom
 By a single candle's glimmering light
 That was only just seen in the dusky
 gloom.
 Many were weeping, and some men
 swore,
 But a low laugh rose when the light
 died out,
 And we said, "Here we seek for the
 truth no more,
 They have left us in darkness to
 wander about."
 Yet were we glad that the end had
 come,
 And the torrents of foolish speech
 were dumb.

 But in the name of God to smite
 Him that was walking with God in
 light !
 And in the name of God to wreak
 Wrath on the lowly heart and meek !
 And in the name of God to pray
 O'er such a work as they did that day,
 Little witting what they were at !—
 In God's name what is the end of that ?

 Outcast now from its fellowship,
 Still to the Kirk he fondly clung,
 And often he said, with quivering lip,
 How good it was, when the bell was
 rung,
 To go where the grand old Psalms
 were sung,
 And to be where lowly hearts were
 bent
 In prayer and holy Sacrament ;
 For the Kirk made brave and earnest
 men,
 And he loved her now as he loved
 her then.
 So he lived on, the meekest saint,
 Nor wasted his life in vain complaint,

Nor formed another sect to claim
That it was the true Jerusalem,
And rear its altars in his name ;
But gathered around him thoughtful
youth,
Inspiring them with the love of truth,
And to look for guidance from above,
And to believe that God is Love.

At first, of course, we were only few—
Just one here, and another there—
Suspected and distrusted too,
And work was scanty, and calls
were rare.

But soon the leaven spread, and we
Became a goodly company :
And many a pulpit in the land
Ere long was quickened by his faith,
And sounded forth the message grand
That Love had vanquished sin and
death,

That God had been a little Child,
And walked with sinners, undefiled,
And with the wicked had made His
grave,

That grace and hope might come
to all,
And all might join the battle brave
Who heard, and would obey His call.
And we grew bold, and dared to greet
The outcast in his failing years
With words of love and honour meet,
That filled his wistful eyes with tears—
Never a task I laboured at
So much to my liking as writing
that—

For he had meekly born the yoke,
And now behold the seed had sprung,
And over all the Church awoke
The same glad strain which he had
sung.

O mystery of truth, whose hour
Of sorrow is its day of power,
Which but accepts its cross, and then
Rides forth in its might to conquer
men !

But who was the heretic kept apart
From the truth and life by his faith-
less heart ? *

He who was loser, but still loved on ?
Or he who gave up his love, and won ?
Ah ! would you read God's meaning ?
look

Not on the bright, shining page of
His Book,

But where the shadow lies dark on
the face

Of some tragic failure, some proud
disgrace.

For the loss is gain, and the gain is loss,
And the shame is glory when He wills
That thou shouldst shine in the healing
Cross,

Which all the Law by love fulfils.

SABBATH EVENING LONG AGO

I SEE the old home on the Sabbath
night—

It smelt of heresy to call it Sunday,
A heathen name, although we held it
right

To paganise the Saturday and Monday.

The cruse hung on the jamb, with
poor rush pith

That, soaked in whale oil, dimly kept
a-gleaming ;

More shadows filled the room than
lights therewith,

And how those wavering shadows set
me dreaming !

A sea-coal fire glowed on the old
Dutch slates,

And on the brown carved settle near
the doorway,

And on a rack of willow-pattern plates,

And on a bronze-hued wooden bowl
from Norway.

A mighty cauldron simmered by the fire,
 Whereto our hungry eyes kept often turning,
 For the much-preaching sharpened the desire
 To satisfy the flesh we had been spurning.

In the big chair the father gravely sat,
 And round the fire the household gathered quiet;
 The dog wheeled round, and, coiling on the mat,
 Slept through the lesson, profiting not by it.

And then we went right through the "Catechism,"
 From "Man's chief end," to "Amen" in conclusion—
 Heaven's white light broken in a logic prism
 To clear our thought, and end in dire confusion.

Mostly I did not understand at all,
 And my mind wandering seemed to hear the shouting
 Of comrades at a game of bat or ball;
 But where I understood, it set me doubting.

So those high orthodoxies came to be;
 Quick seeds in me of heterodox opinion,
 And, ere I wist, my thoughts were all at sea,
 And drifted, holden by no wise dominion.

I knew not how those Westminster Divines
 To Scots beyond the Tweed their faith had given,
 But I rebelled to travel on those lines
 Which made so hard and dark a way to Heaven.

Still the small mind chafed at the strenuous thought
 Of those stern Puritans who faced, unwincing,
 The darkest problems of our human lot,
 And solved them with a text, as all-convincing.

But while the grave old father questioned on,
 I marked his dome of forehead, time had wrinkled,
 And to myself I kept my thoughts alone,
 And the dog dreamed on, and the rushlight twinkled.

In him there was a faith serene and strong,
 In me an unrest, like the rush of water;
 Without, there was a Credo hard and long,
 Within, there was a resolute Negatur.

Yet in his stern creed lay a tender heart,
 The husk o'erlaid a wealth of human kindness
 And love, that fain their wisdom would impart
 To purge the young soul of its earthly blindness.

And it did store the mind with furniture—
 In forms antique, forbidding peaceful slumber,
 But morticed well, and fashioned to endure,
 Hard to get into, or out of heads they cumber.

I wot not what our later faiths may do
 For us, what time our troubled lives may need them,
 But through that stern old creed a nation grew
 Toughest and staunchest in the fight of freedom.

CREEDS

Ah ! these old creeds,
 Who can believe them to-day ?
 Yet were brave deeds
 Inspired by them once, too ; and they
 Made men of heroic mould
 In the great fighting ages of old.

Is it the wounds
 Which science has given ? or the sap
 On critical grounds,
 Which has brought about their mishap ?
 Nay, these touched not a vital spot,
 Though they brag of the wreck they
 have wrought.

But the spirit has risen
 From the hard, narrow letter which kept
 Men's thoughts in a prison,
 Where they struggled or languished or
 slept ;
 And now we can soar high above
 All the creeds, but the Credo of Love.

They are things of the past,
 Survivals, and now out of date ;
 The men were not cast
 In our moulds, who endured such a
 weight,
 So linked and compact : let them go,
 They who wore them had no room to
 grow.

All too complete,
 They were subtly and skilfully wrought
 With logic neat ;
 But they are not in touch with our
 thought ;
 And they will not allow they have
 found
 Any spot where they have not sure
 ground.

They are ever so far
 From the days we are living in now,

From our work and our war,
 And the thoughts that are aching our
 brow ;
 And yet though they be but part true,
 Vain to patch up the old, or make new.

Creed-making now
 In these latter ages of time
 Would yield stuff, I trow,
 Thin and loose as a small poet's
 rhyme—
 Tags and thrums, hints and guesses, no
 more,
 With a deep, settled doubt at the core.

What not to believe,
 That now is the stage we are at ;
 And how shall we weave
 Any faith to live on out of that ?
 There must go to the making of creeds
 Sure hearts, girded up for high deeds.

But ours is an age
 Of unmaking, taking things down :
 For the warfare we wage
 We must swarm from the fortified
 town,
 And spread out, to find air and room,
 Beyond the old walls and their gloom.

Yet we have faith
 In the Right and the True and the
 Good,
 And in Him whose last breath
 Was the prayer of a pitiful mood,
 Which smites the meek spirit with awe,
 And with Love, the true life of all
 Law.

THE DISCOVERY OF GOD

Who was the man that found out God ?
 And what the method that he took ?
 Did he, with patient travail, look
 For footprints on the sand or sod,

Making it plain that, on a time,
A mighty Architect stood here,
Building the earth up, tier on tier,
And working out a plan sublime ?

Or did he trace, with curious skill,
Nice-fashioning touches on the clay
That man was made of, and the way
That it was modelled to fulfil

The artist's purpose, when at length
The pulses of its life should beat,
And find the eye and ear complete,
And hand with delicate touch and
strength ?

And as he traced the facts and laws,
Close-linking the high argument
Of reason, was the great event—
An infinite all-designing Cause ?

Thus, step by step, did he go on,
Groping through darkness toward light,
Until the vision of glory bright
Dawned on his soul, and doubt was
gone,

And in the splendour of the day
The universe revealed its sense,
And throbbed with clear intelligence,
And bade him worship now and pray,

For lo ! the wondrous Book, no more
Anonymous, disclosed to view
Its Author and its meaning too,
Which were a secret heretofore ?

Ah ! what a moment that had been,
When such a thought first broke on him,
And filled his being to the brim
With awe of what his mind had seen !

Who was the grand discoverer ?
What age was honoured to contain
This man of subtle and daring brain—
The one divine philosopher ?

Could mortals e'er forget his name,
Or history fail to note the day
When that dread veil was rent away,
And God a proven Truth became ?

One finds a new world, one, a star
Undreamt of hitherto, and men
Hold high their names in honour then
Through all the ages near and far.

But what are these to him who found
The truth in which all others meet,
The central thought which makes
complete,
And clears up all the glorious round ;

The will which shapes what may befall,
The power that wrought whate'er
hath been,
The light wherein all light is seen,
The life that is the life of all ?

Nay, no Columbus here may boast
That, plunging in an unknown sea,
He made this grand discovery,
Being sore-spent and tempest-tossed.

No seeker sought, till he did find
The secret hid from ages past,
The mystery of the First and Last,
The Peace that filleth heart and mind,

By links of patient reason brought
Out of the sum of finite things.
He reasons ill whose reason brings
Such outcome from his partial thought—

From light and shadow perfect light,
Pure good from mingled good and ill,
From tokens of mechanic skill
Illimitable glory and might.

Vain dreamer of an idle dream
In logic forms ! Did any one
Discover by his quest the sun,
That seeks us with his searching beam ?

Who pries about the world to find
Proof that he is in heaven? who mines
The earth in search of frequent signs
That shall suffice to clear his mind,

And certify the wondrous power,
That burns upon the morning cloud,
And makes the song-bird glad and loud,
And paints the shining leaf and flower?

Thou didst not find God hidden there
In problem of His acts and days;
But He reveals Himself, and lays
To the pure heart His glory bare.

THE INVENTION OF GOD

SOME tell us that, in evil hour,
Our fears invented God, the dread
Of our forefathers lying dead,
Or of some dark, malignant Power

That sendeth pestilence and drought,
And storms and desolating wars,
And horrid glare of baleful stars,
And grief and pain, and fear and doubt:

Wherefore the troubled spirit dreamed
A Phantom stood upon its path,
And hastened to appease His wrath
By whatsoe'er it most esteemed.

Man did not know the law that binds
Whatever is with all that was,
And in the sum of complex cause
A deep unconscious wisdom finds.

A savage without science, he
Sat shivering in his dirty rag,
And deemed some godhead held a bag,
Filled full of pain and misery,

Which he let loose on hapless men,
What time, an hungered, he would dine
On ample flesh, and bread and wine,
And found his altar stinted then.

And so man's fear invented God;
For thunder-clap and stormy blast,
And fire-stream from the mountain cast
Seemed the fell strokes of His angry rod;

And pestilence His deadly breath,
And war a game He loved to play
For pastime of an idle day,
That gambled with our life and death:

Wherefore men crept up to His feet,
And licked the dust in abject fear,
And howled their prayers into His ear,
Or gashed them, and their bosoms beat.

Strange savage, in the nutting wood,
Who, just emerged from apehood,
framed

Articulate speech, and all things named,
And, brooding in a troubled mood,

Invented God! Our triumphs are
But trifles it were best to hide,
But poor mechanic toys, beside
The trophies of Thy fruitful war.

O semi-brute! thou hadst a dream
Transcending all that we can reach,
For thou invented'st God and Speech,
And we have only compassed—Steam.

And Thou dark Phantom of our fears,
How comes the heart to cling to Thee
For comfort in its misery,
And drying of its blinding tears?

The stream that from the height comes
down,

And foams along the rock-strewn
course,

Can never rise above its source,
But creepeth down by grange and town;

Yet from that spring of coward dread,
That Phantom born of wrath and death,
Come holy love, brave-hearted faith,
And hope with heavenly visions fed!

THE VISION OF GOD

O THE silences of heaven,
 How they speak to me of God,
 Now the veil in twain is riven
 That concealed where He abode !
 Yet its clouds were once around Him,
 And I sought Him in despair,
 And never there I found Him,
 Till I brought Him with me there.

Not the optic glass revealed Him,
 No mechanical device
 Pierced the darkness that concealed
 Him

With a vision more precise :
 Only lowliness can merit
 That His secret He should tell ;
 Only spirit seeth spirit,
 And the heart that loveth well.

Never till His love hath found thee,
 Shall the cloud and mist depart ;
 Vain to seek Him all around thee,
 Till He dwell within thy heart.
 Not without thee, but within thee
 Must the oracle be heard,
 As He seeketh still to win thee,
 And to guide thee by His word.

When I found Him in my bosom,
 Then I found Him everywhere,
 In the bud and in the blossom,
 In the earth and in the air ;
 And He spake to me with clearness
 From the silent stars that say,
 As ye find Him in His nearness,
 Ye shall find Him far away.

THE BURDEN OF GOD

I BORE a load of doubt and care,
 And could not reason it away ;
 It might have no right to be there,
 Yet clung to me by night and day.

And I was fain to be alone,
 A stranger in a far-off land,
 Where friend and helper I had none,
 Nor any that could understand.
 Oh for a glad, entrancing faith !
 Oh for an all-controlling thought
 To fill my soul, as with a breath
 That from the Eternal life is brought !
 Let me but be alone with God
 A little while on some high place,
 Where rarely foot of man hath trod,
 That I may see Him face to face.
 So did they long of old, who built
 High altars on the hill-tops bare,
 To leave their load of sin and guilt,
 And find the peace they hoped for
 there.

Then I went toiling up the glen,
 Like one that wanders in a dream,
 Past broad-eaved homes of toiling
 men,
 Along the swiftly rushing stream,
 Past the white kirk with ruddy spire,
 And solitary wayside shrine
 Where peasant mothers did admire
 The mother of the Babe divine,
 Past orchards where the tawny steer,
 Black-muzzled, stood and whisked
 his tail,
 While men sat in the tavern near,
 With flask of wine or mug of ale.
 I heard the sharp *whish* of the scythe,
 And dragging of the patient rake,
 I heard the children singing blithe,
 And felt as if my heart would break.
 They sang the song of Bethlehem,
 And glad their voices were and clear ;
 And oh that I could sing like them,
 And only knew that God would hear !

Still on, I bore my burden on,
 Finding no help in kirk or shrine,
 Or crucifix of carven stone,
 Or picture of the Babe divine :

Alone, I must be all alone,
 Beyond the mighty wooded slopes;
 I would have company with none,
 But those vast, silent mountain tops
 Which held me with their snowy spell,
 And bade me come to where they stood,
 And in their white robes, worshipped
 well
 The Everlasting Pure and Good.

I took the steep rock-path that winds
 Through the pine wood above the
 stream,—

High up, the grey-green glacier grinds,
 Far down, its grey-green waters gleam,
 A torrent from a neighbouring cliff
 Leaped down, and disappeared halfway,
 To fall in tremulous mist, as if
 Nature to me was fain to say—
 See how the rush of lofty thought,
 The higher that its way appears,
 The deeper that its rest is sought,
 Still vanishes in mist and tears.

Still up the rugged path I went,
 With panting breath and trembling
 knees,
 And weary limb, and back low bent,
 Till, past the belt of great pine trees,
 I came upon a sunny glade
 Open and green, with brooks and wells,
 And crocus fields where cattle wade,
 With noise of many jangling bells,
 And flat-roofed chalets, piled with
 stone,

For winds are boisterous there and wild;
 But kirk or steeple there was none,
 Only the Virgin and her Child,
 Kept in some homely box for shrine,
 And sheltered in a quiet nook,
 Where humble worship might incline
 With bended knee, and lowly look.
 But all these fond traditions stood—
 How sweet soe'er their tender grace—
 Between me and the Pure and Good,
 And I must see Him face to face.

A little speech, a little rest,
 A cup of goat's milk at the door;
 Bid me not stay and be your guest,
 There are a good eight hours and more,
 Before the sun dips in the west,
 And I must on at any price,
 To see his evening glories rest
 Upon the pale green glacier ice,
 And on the web of pallid snow
 That wraps the hills in raiment white,
 And on the changing clouds below
 That catch the fringes of His light.
 I did not tell my inmost thought:
 Those neat-herds could not well divine
 How I, in search of God, was brought
 Away from kirk and cross and shrine.

Still up and up; the Alpen-stock
 Oft buried in the turf before,
 Now smote upon the living rock,
 And from its heart the fire-spark tore;
 And as I trod the gradual slope
 'Neath some snow-crested precipice,
 And glanced round, with a passing hope
 Of chamois fleet or Edelweiss,
 Lo, then my step grew lightsomer,
 And cheerily I sped along,
 And in the brisk and tingling air
 I could have broken into song.
 And this I took for omen true,
 That I was on the way of peace,
 That doubts were where the pine-
 woods grew,
 And with the haunts of man would cease.

And so at length I trod the snow
 On the hill-top that afternoon,
 And saw it in the evening glow,
 And in the sheen o' th' pallid moon,
 And saw the wondrous morning dawn,
 All rosy, on the white-robed peaks
 That, ranged like priest-forms in
 their lawn,
 Served, through eternal holy weeks,
 About the altar of the Lord,
 Awful in their blanch beauty there,

Silent, as if with one accord
Wrapt in the hush of speechless prayer.
There was no sound of man or beast,
Nor hum of bee, nor song of bird,
And more the silence seemed increased
What time the avalanche was heard.

Once they had held me with a spell,
And drawn me with a mystic force,
Those hills, as deeming God must dwell
There where the waters had their
source,
Which made the vales and meadows
glad ;

There where, in majesty sublime,
The changeless snow-clad summits had
No reckoning of the passing time.
There 'mid the everlasting snow
Should I not see the eternal right,
And look down on the mists below,
And gaze up to the fount of light,
And find my burden fall away,
And feel at last the perfect calm
That broods in the unchanging day,
And vision of the great I Am ?

But as I stood upon the height,
I did not find what I had sought,
I did not find the perfect light,
That answered to my wistful thought ;
It did not ease me of my load,
That I had left the world behind ;
I was not any nearer God
By being far from humankind.
And up amid the bands of ice
And silent fields of clinging snow,
I could have purchased with a price
The Virgin and the Babe below.
For not in nature's awfulness,
And majesty and purity,
And not in her dread silences
Shall God reveal His depths to thee ;
But in a heart that throbs to thine,
And tongue that speaks a human speech :
The human is the one divine,
That yearning human souls can reach.

There is no scene of earth fulfils
The high hope of the soaring mind,
And in the quiet of the hills
The peace of God I did not find ;
And sweet it was with weary limbs,
Ere long to sit i' the kirk, and hear
The children singing in their hymns,
That Christ was come, and God
was near.

WHAT PILATE THOUGHT OF IT

WHAT would you have, my Lucius ?
Here our wits,
Which you in Rome keep ever sharp
and bright
By constant use, are blunted, and the
sword
Clings to the scabbard, only to be drawn
Too late. Oh, thus and thus I should
have spoken
And thus I should have done. How
cleverly
We manage, when we sit down by
the fire,
And, having all the dialogue to
ourselves,
We find the answer pat, which does
not come
I' th' strain of acting ! But you do
not know
This people—Would I were like you
in that !
“Are they dull-brained, these Jews,
then ? Are there none
To whet your wits upon, and keep
them keen ?
No crafty priest to fence with—
demagogue
To trip up in his talk—no politic
Schemer to countermine — or wily
lawyer
To follow through his trick and artifice
Of rhetoric, and exercise the brain

We used to think a good one?"

Plenty of them,

Priests, plotters, demagogues as thick
as flies

In Egypt, and like flies they settle on
Your eyes to sting and blind them.

But they are not

Like other men. You cannot count
upon

Their motives, or their methods, or
their aims.

What they may love, and what they
may abhor,

The oaths that bind them, or the gods
they fear,

All are most strange and baffling.

'Tis as if

You dealt with beings of another world
Whose passions are not ours, whose
ways of thinking

Are alien to our modes. The
strangest people!

So pious and so wicked! methodical
In lying, with a reason always ready,
Yet full of contradictions, as the way
Of lying is apt to be even in adepts;
And they are deep practitioners.

Then, too, Cæsar

Distrusts me, and when I have served
him best,

Lo, comes a deputation of these Jews,
Whose women throng the backstairs
of the palace,

Backed by their money-lending
Trastiveres,

And every one a traitor at his heart,
Impeaching me of rapine and of blood,
And thereon comes a rescript. What
can I,

But let them plot, looking as if I saw
Mere loyal service, till the plot be ripe,
Then crush them with my legions?

Only force

Can rule this beastly Plebs, and their
worse leaders;

And Cæsar, if he knew them as I do,

Would leave the Gauls and Britons,
and let loose

The sword upon these Hebrews. Oh
to be—

But for my hungry creditors—once
more

I' the Campus Martius on unruliest
steed,

Or scouring the Campania, rather than
Managing these cursèd Jews! I've
lost my nerve

Among them—yet their daughters are
most fair.

But of this prophet, Jesus. You must
know,

I had been supping late with Rufus
Naso,

And young Cornelius, and the
Advocate

Publius Julius, and some other wits,
Visitors here from Rome: all full of
spirits,

That hardly needed my best Cyprian
wine,

Just smacking of the goatskin, to let
loose

The sparkling jest, the latest story told
About the Augurs, Seneca's neat
phrase,

And your quick repartee, Nerissa's
strokes

Of wit, and Lydia's languishing,
and all

The pleasant life about the Mammertine,
For which one longs in this Jerusalem.

This growing slack, i' th' hush we
heard a song,

A great "Hallel" about the Temple
gate,

Repeated here and there all through
the town

Pleasantly, for these Jews are musical,
And have a better choir than you in

Rome,
With antiphones and linked melodies

That toss the sweet strains to and fro
 i' th' air,
 And pick them up again, and blend
 their notes
 To catch the soul with rapture. I alone
 Knew 'twas their Pascha, chief of all
 their Feasts,
 Joyful, yet solemn, not like the wild riot
 Of booths and bonfires in the Autumn
 when
 They hold their Lupercalia, and go
 mad.
 We had well drunk, and were in
 merry humour;
 So nought would serve but we must
 travesty
 The rite. By Bacchus, 'twas the
 rarest prank,
 Though it may cost me dear. About
 midnight
 Each girt his coat about him, donned
 his sandals
 As ready for a journey, with a staff
 Handy, for so their Priests had
 ordered it;
 And thereupon the slaves brought in
 the feast.
 But for a lamb we had a roasted swine,
 Which is abomination to the Jew,
 And sweet-baked fruits instead of
 bitter herbs,
 And flagons of rare Cyprus, and we sang
 Some ribald songs to the air of their
 Hallel,
 Till far into the morning. As day
 broke
 We heard the loud tramp of a throng
 of men
 Fast hurrying through the streets.
 That sobered us.
 Were those fierce Jews, then, muster-
 ing to avenge
 The insult? How could I so play
 the fool,
 Knowing the crafty Annas had his spies
 About me—that they tell him all I do,

Who visits me, what letters I have writ,
 Even what I eat and drink, and all
 my dallying
 With that witch, Leila, whom I half
 suspect
 To be the chief tale-bearer? O
 crass fool!
 To fall into his power for this poor
 jest.
 "Ho! man the walls, draw up the
 guard in arms!"
 Pshaw! 'tis no riot, only some mad
 prophet
 The priests are haling to their courts.
 He must be
 An honest one, for they'd have let
 him preach
 Truculent lies till doomsday.
 Well; my head
 Was not so clear as it had need to be
 After that bout, nor were my nerves
 well strung,
 When there rose clamorous outcry at
 the gate,
 And I must to the Judgment Hall,
 where stood
 A lonely prisoner, bound, and faint,
 and weary.
 Some poor men—fishers, as I deemed,
 or shepherds—
 Flitted about i' th' shadow, looking
 scared,
 As loth to leave him, yet afraid
 to stand
 Right at his side. All his accusers
 were
 Clamouring outside the court. It
 would have tainted
 Their sanctity at such a sacred time,
 And barred them from the worship
 of their God,
 To cross our unclean threshold; for
 we all—
 Cæsar and all his Prætors and their
 courts—
 Are in their eyes defiling and unholy.

They might be forging lies : no doubt,
 they were ;
 They seldom do aught else. They
 might imbrue
 Their hands in innocent blood ; that
 mattered not ;
 Such things are trifles to your grim
 fanatic.
 But they must not be tainted by the touch
 Of Romans ! O my Lucius, how
 the gods,
 If any gods there be, must laugh at us
 Who hold them bound by such nice
 ceremony,
 And free from conscience—Would I
 were a god !

I found my prisoner was the Prophet,
 Jesus,
 Whom I had sometime heard of as a kind
 Of Hebrew Stoic, like our Seneca,
 But practising, as well as preaching, that
 Hard and high doctrine. Certain
 words of his
 Had reached me now and then, like
 thistle-down
 Blown i' th' air, which had the ring
 in them
 Of true philosophy : but other some
 Were dreamy ; part, good coin, and
 part too fine
 A metal for this world to traffic in.
 I'd heard too that he had the singular
 art
 Of healing them by faith, imagina-
 tion—
 Whate'er it be—which filled their
 minds with wonder,
 So that some deemed a god had come
 to earth.
 Half curiously I scanned him.
 Homely clad,
 Like those his fellow-workmen ;
 broken, too,
 By toil and travel and poverty and
 sorrow,

And all unlike the Immortals, as our
 Poets
 Conceive them, and our sculptors
 fashion them.
 Yet there was something in his look
 and bearing
 That overawed me. As I looked
 on him,
 There rose in me a memory of my
 mother
 White as a lily and sweet, and of the
 days
 When I was like a white bud on
 her bosom,
 That now am so bedraggled. What
 could it mean ?
 Those women of the Court who rave
 about him
 Cry up his beauty ; but whom they
 admire
 They clothe with loveliness, and
 Socrates
 Himself should walk in guise of bright
 Apollo,
 Not like a satyr, were he but their hero.
 And this man's beauty, if beautiful
 he were,
 Was not like th' young Augustus.
 This, at least,
 I could have sworn, that he was in-
 nocent,
 Whate'er these Jews might say. But
 here was I
 In this mad tragi-comedy of life
 Playing the part of Judge, while he
 stood there
 To plead with me for life !—But that
 he did not.
 No, not so much as one word did
 he utter
 To win our grace, but looked me in
 the face,
 Silently searching me, as who should
 say,
 "Thou, my Judge, Thou !" until I
 quailed before him,

Feeling the mockery of justice, where
The power was mine, the righteousness was his.

But how to save him, guiltless, from
their guile?

So I went forth, and asked them:

“What have ye
Against this man?” He called him-
self a King,

And they would have no king but
only Cæsar.

The lying rogues had plotted against
Cæsar,

Raised tumults, broke into rebellions,
cursed

His Prætors, Publicans, and legionaries,
And at that very hour were scheming
treasons:

Yet they would have no king but
only Cæsar!

I could not hide my scorn. Since
when had they

Become so loyal to the imperial throne?
So deep devoted to the power they

cursed
At all their feasts? Thereon they

clenched their teeth,
And muttered something about blas-

phemy,
And making himself God. Therefore

I bade them
Take him away, and judge him by

their law—
They had no power o’er life—because

our law
Held it no crime for one to be a god;

Cæsar was one, so were the great
twin-brethren,

And Hercules, and other mighty men.
I had no jurisdiction o’er the gods,

And this man might be one of them,
for aught

I knew or cared. Then rose a yell
of rage,

Deep-throated, fierce, malignant, from
the pit

Of Acheron; “Thou art not Cæsar’s
friend,

If thou let this man go.”

So I went back,
Knowing that I had raised a storm
might dash me

A broken wreck at Annas’ feet. And
there

He stood, this King o’ th’ Jews, bent
low and bound,

Yet with that lofty, overawing look
Which made my eyes droop—Majesty

uncrowned
Of noble manhood, not yet stained
by falls

In the arena.

“Art thou, then, a King?”
But not a syllable he answered, only

Gazed on me with a look of pity.

It was
A foolish question; for of course I

knew,
Not for such crime had Annas brought

him here,
Who would have prayed and sacrificed

and poured
The consecrating oil on any head

That in brief triumph had been
lifted up

Against great Cæsar. Oh, I know
the man!

Nothing were less a crime among
these Jews

Than treason against Rome. I’ve
had to crush

A score of their rebellions, and this
Annas

Was in them all, although his hand
was hidden;

Chief plotter he of all. A foolish
question!

Better if I had frankly asked him, why
Do these your countrymen so hate

you that
They do accuse you falsely? But

somehow,

Seeing that broken, poor, and pitiful
 Rival of Cæsar, I must say to him:
 "A King, then, are you?" He
 despised me for it,
 And held his peace, which partly
 fretted me,
 And partly my own sense of being
 wrong.
 So then I said: "Dost thou not know
 that I
 Have power to take thy life?" But
 calmly he:
 "Thou hast no power, but as 'tis
 given to thee;
 So much the more their guilt who
 brought me here."
 What could he mean? These Jews
 are cunning dogs;
 Of course, I had no power but what
 I got
 From Cæsar. What, if Annas meant
 to drive me
 To stretch my large commission till
 it rent?
 I must be wary.
 Just then came a note,
 Sent by my wife, and bidding me
 take heed,
 Nor harm this man. She had some
 dream about him,
 And dreams are from the gods.
 Pshaw! let the women
 See to their own affairs, not meddle with
 The course of justice. No doubt,
 Chusa's wife—
 She's wild about this prophet—came
 to her,
 And they between them had conspired
 to stay
 The law by this device. I'd half
 a mind
 To do the very thing they wished
 me not,
 Just for their meddling; but thought
 better of it.
 My wife has a sharp tongue.

 Then I went forth
 Once more to face these Jews: "I
 find no fault
 Worthy of death, by our law, or of
 bonds
 In this your King, or God, or what-
 soe'er
 The poor man calls himself. So, I
 will scourge him,
 And let him go"—though why he
 should be scourged
 'Twere hard to tell, except to humour
 those
 Who should have had the scourge on
 their own backs
 Laid roundly; but a man who is
 accused,
 We come to think has reason to be
 thankful,
 If he escape with scourging. Anyhow,
 More bitterly malignant than before,
 The mob of smiths and cobblers
 roared at me,
 And my weak plan. My nerves had
 been unstrung,
 I tell you, or I had not heeded them.
 Pilate was never coward.
 Then some one said
 Something about the Nazarene, whereat
 I grasped as any drowning man.
 "He is
 A Galilean then, King Herod's subject,
 And Herod is in town to keep the
 feast;
 'Tis his affair: A letter shall be writ;
 A guard ho! take him to the king;
 let Herod
 Settle this business. It is none of
 mine."
 A happy thought that! Herod had
 been cool
 Of late, or worse than cool; and this
 would please
 The old fox's vanity, delivering me
 From the so tangled hank, and let
 me break

My fast in peace.—I saw the meal
laid out
In tempting grapes, and dates, and
figs, and melons,
And old Falernian, and I longed to
grasp
The silver cup and quaff it. Laugh-
ing, then,
At this rare stroke, I hurried them away,
But scarce came from the bath re-
freshed, when lo!
The wave rolled back. Herod had
been well pleased
With our sweet courtesy, but could
not think
Of meddling with the Imperial
jurisdiction
In treasonable affairs; so sent the man,
After some rough and ribald jest-
ing back,
Robed in a mockery of regal purple,
And crowned with thorns. O irony
of Fate!
Whom even the gods escape not:
what fell spite
Led thee to bind this burden now
on me?
I was a fool to look for any help
From Herod. He not long ago
had killed
Another of their prophets—a brave man,
And eloquent, and true. I heard
him preach
At the King's Court once, and he
made us all
Willing, for half an hour at least, to strip
Our purple and fine linen off, and send
The banquet, getting ready, to feed
the poor.
And since that deed, his conscience
pricking him,
The crafty Idumean had turned coward,
And thought this Jesus might be John
come back
From Hades to amaze his murderer,
And haunt him.

As I turned to Jesus now,
Weary he looked and broken, as a man
Done with the world; and half in
pity I said,
"So thou art come back crowned?
A king then truly?"
"Thou say'st," he answered; "Yea,
I am a King;
Only my kingdom is not of this world,
But therefore am I come, to witness of
The truth, and who are of the truth
hear me."
"Truth! what is truth?" I asked.
"Where is it? Can
I see, or touch, or taste, or smell
it?" Was
This man a dreamer, being no
longer boy,
But wearing beard unblemished, that
he spake
Of truth as of his kingdom where
he reigned
Supreme?—an airy realm, ungrudged,
I ween,
By Cæsar! We were youths, my
Lucius, once,
And wasted many a night in barren talk
About the truth; when in the Agora
We breathed the air that Plato used
to breathe
While Athens still was Queen, and
wore her crown
With majesty; but, since we came
to manhood,
We've had to act, not dream. Nor
did this man
Look like a dreamer; and I must admit
These Jews, whate'er they be, are not
like some
Of those strange Eastern peoples whom
I've seen,
Squatting for years in some uneasy
posture,
Fed on a lettuce, or a stalk of garlic,
Talking of truth, and dreaming in
the sun

That blistered them by day, and in
the moon
That all the night bedewed them,
being held
Divinely wise because most mad.
The Jew
Is shrewd, and has a bottom of
good sense
Beneath his superstitions, like the stones
And gravel over which a river runs.
He trades, and lends on usury, and gains
Shekels where you'd scarce find an
obolus ;
Keen at a bargain, hard as any flint,
And nowise given to dreaming. Yet
this man
Could speak of truth, and of a king-
dom there !
" Truth—what is truth ? " So I went
forth again.

" I find no fault in this man. He
has broken
No law of Cæsar's, nor may Cæsar dread
His schemes, or be he Prophet, King,
or God.
But you've a custom, good or bad—
most part
Bad I should say, or only good
for rogues—
To get release of some offender now
At Pascha. There's Barabbas, thief
and rebel
And murderer too, him take and crucify ;
This Christ I will have scourged, and
let him go."
So I had done my utmost, tried all ways
To save him, though he uttered not
a word,
Nor sought for mercy, nor encour-
aged me
In my endeavours, nor approved
my deed.
What happened then ? A growl of
sullen wrath,
Low murmur of petition unto Cæsar :

" Not this man, but Barabbas ! Crucify,
Crucify this one, or " — I saw the
old Priest
Writing upon his tablets, with a cold
Clear eye, and half a smile upon
the thin
And bloodless lips of him. What
could I do ?
He knew of last night's frolic, and
other things
I need not name, which might look
bad in Rome
Even to one's friends, and worse when
told by those
Who hungered for my post—they
would not be
So eager if they knew it. It was hard
To do, for he had interested me ;
But yet if I should free him, they
would rend
The man in pieces, such was their
fierce temper ;
And if he died now, while his dreams
had still
The sweet breath of young innocence,
better so
Than after that bad schooling he
will get
Among his people ; like enough at heart
He was a traitor also—all Jews are—
And only got his due ; but that
thought called
A blush up in my soul, for secretly
I knew it was a lie. At any rate,
If one must die, 'twere better he than I,
And for a little more or less of blood
Upon my hands, that did not trouble me,
Although I washed them there before
the mob
In token of my innocence, while they
Cried, " Yea, his blood on us and on
our children ! "
The thing was done so, not to
be undone :
I wish it were to do, and my head cool
As it is now ; no matter, it is done.

There was not one to say a word for him; He was alone, not backed by any man, And yet he had for years been heal- ing them, I wot not by what power, only the fact Was clear, however fancy coloured it. Their deaf and dumb, their lepers and their blind, Their fevered and bed-ridden had been cured, And some averred their very dead been raised By him; but that, of course, was all a dream Of fond imagination, or, it may be, A trick to catch their faith: at any rate, The land was ringing with his mighty deeds, And yet there came not one to speak for him. Had any man stood up, and said to me, "Lo! I was blind, and now I see," or "I Was mad, and am in my right mind again," Or "I was cripple, and behold I walk, And this man did it," then it would have been A case to send to Cæsar for decision, Being past my wits, and needing a divine Insight like his. But no! these grateful Jews Said nought but, "Crucify him! Crucify!" They say that he died sweetly, and they talk About his having risen again, and spoken To certain of his followers, and the priests Would have these stories silenced by the law. Nay, let the poor fools have such comfort as	They find in these fond dreams. I know he's dead. My fellows never leave their work half done; Their lives should answer for it, if they did. No doubt, he's dead; a spear-thrust in the heart Made sure of that; he'll trouble us no more. 'Tis a strange thirst these priests have still for blood; If they had shed as much of it as we, They'd hate the smell of it. And yet I'd give Something to learn if Annas' blood is like What flows in other men. I hear them shouting "The Lord is risen indeed!" I wish he were; 'Twould take a load off me to see Him living, And what I did, undone. But that's past hope; The dead are dead for ever. Speak well of me, My Lucius, to Sylvia and Nerissa, What time you sup in the old tavern by The Pincian, and the wine and mirth are free. Cæsar will hardly trouble himself about This prophet's death, since it has pleased the Jews, But you might say a good word for him truly, And strike that old rogue, Annas. A good deed! Oh that I could but squeeze from these hard Jews Some certain talents, and get back to Rome! But they have sucked me rather, leaving only The dry rind o' the orange. Fare thee well!
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A PULPITEER

SAT in his inn after breakfast a lean
 little man with the look,
 Withered and shrunk, of one whose
 moisture was dried, like a brook
 Where the sun burns hot in the tropics ;
 but now he was home once more
 In the place where he first drew breath
 near the sands of the North Sea
 shore :

And he held in his hand a " poster,"
 big-lettered in black and red,
 Which he read with a cynical sneer ;
 then low to himself he said :

" Service begins at eleven, but the
 door will be open at ten " :

That means a crush to get in, with
 screaming of women, and men
 Barely just kept from swearing by
 dread of the Sabbath day,

And swearing the more in their hearts ;
 it were better for women to stay
 At home, and see to their children,
 instead of losing their wits

Crushed in a trampling crowd, till they
 go off in fainting fits.

No, I'll not face it. How should I
 sit still in a narrow pew

For an hour, with my legs a-cramp,
 and with nothing on earth to do

But stare at the white-washed walls,
 and gasp for a mouthful of air,

And smell the hot peppermint breaths,
 and the oil in the young bucks' hair,

And watch how faces grow purple, and
 bald heads are smoking like censers ?

Nay, I will sit by the fire here, and
 read that last volume of Spencer's.

There's more in a sentence of his
 than in all that this fellow can say,

Though he preach for an hour by the
 clock." So he kicked his boots out
 of the way.

That was his first thought. But
 hardly had he reached out for his
 book,

And settled him down in an easy chair
 in the cosiest nook,

With a big cigar in his mouth, and the
 cloud-smoke round his head

Curling in wavy rings, when once
 more he looked up and said—

" Yet we were fellows at College
 together, and friends too once,

This famous preacher and I, and he
 was not a bit of a dunce,

But fairly well up in his classics,
 though logic was always his *forte* ;

A rare, good hand at debate, ever
 prompt with a clever retort ;

Not very strong in science, but skilled
 with his pen to write,

And making his half-dark thinking
 clearer than other men's light ;

A smart rhetorician truly, with a
 ready tongue in his head,

Though he looked so clumsy and
 loutish, and homespun and country-
 bred.

He is starrng it here, as I learn ; has
 come to revive their faith,

To stir up the fire whose embers were
 smouldering nigh unto death.

I care not much for your stars ; and
 for starrng parsons least ;

The better they are at that, they have
 less the true heart of a priest.

But they say that he gave up a living
 to be free to go here and there,

Where a boat was wrecked, or the
 Devil broke loose at a rural fair,

Or where the state of religion needed
 a trumpet blast

To rouse them up from the sleep into
 which their souls had been cast

By the abundance of bread.—A queer
 sort of life, no doubt ;

But everyone to his taste.—So, freely
 he goes about,

And passes now for a great man.
That means not much, I allow;
Once great men took to the Church,
but they're somewhat scarce there
now—

One-eyed men among blind folk.
Still he is followed by throngs,

And speaks, they say, to the age of
its duties, its rights and its wrongs;
Not pulpit commonplaces—the leaden
tokens they mint

For everyday use—but sayings news-
papers are fain to print,

Eloquent, flowing periods balanced
and pointed like sonnets,

And his pews are crowded with heads
too, not with mere ribbons and
bonnets.

That's what they tell me, at least, and
they say that you even shall grin,

Now and then, at the hits which he
makes when describing a popular sin.

I do not much care for humour or wit
in the house of prayer;

'Tis so easy with smallest of jokes to
spread ripples of laughter there:

But yes! I must go, after all, and hear
what the man has to say:

He was not a fool, and I daresay it
will be as good as a play.

'Twill be very bad if it is not, as plays
go now. Ah me!

How the bloom and the gloss get rubbed
off everything here that we see!"

So he threw down his book with a
grumble, and out of the room he
strode,

Not quite in the mood for a mortal to
go to the house of God.

A brilliant midsummer day, with a
glorious sun in the blue,

Though clouds were massing all round
it, lurid and sultry in hue,

And there was not a breath to stir the
thirsty and drooping leaves,

And all the wild flowers were alive
with the hum of the honey-thieves,
And the larks were hurrying fast
through their morning songs, as
if they

Dreaded that something might mar
them before high noon of the day.

There was more than a Sabbath hush
in the listless fields, as he passed

Leisurely into the town, whither groups
were hurrying fast

By twos and threes and dozens, like
rills and streams that flowed

Together at last in a river along the
great high road.

It turned out all as he pictured—the
crush at the narrow door,

The screaming and fainting of women
—but nobody cursed or swore—

The squeeze in the straight high pews,
the crowd packed close in the aisles,

The blaze of peony faces, and glimmer
of ghastly smiles,

The reeking and moping of bald heads,
the coughing and taking of snuff:

Yet were they grave too, and patient.
It was God's house: that was

enough.

How well he remembered it all—that
quaint old chapel of ease,

With its high-pitched pulpit, facing the
high deep galleries,

And the sounding-board overhead, and
the dove with the olive branch,

And the votive ship that was hung up
in memory of the launch

Of the first of the Greenland whalers
that out of the harbour sailed.

Proud was the gallant skipper of the
port from which he hailed,

And the kirk where he had been
christened, and the ship where he

held command,

And the minister whom he reckoned
the foremost in all the land:

And he modelled his ship, and hung
it, hull and rigging and block—
He had married the minister's daughter
—right over the gilded clock.
They were sturdy Protestants all there,
yet they saw not the deadly sin
Of a votive ship in the Church, nor
the evils it might bring in.
It was not like vowing candles, or
hanging up waxen limbs
In honour of healing saints, with
chaunting of prayers and hymns :
And it grew to be almost sacred in all
men's memories,
When ship and skipper were crushed in
the ice-packed Greenland seas.

But more than the high-pitched pulpit,
and the dove and the olive twig,
And more than the many-sparred
whaler, so neat and trim in its rig,
And the great square pew where the
elders spread out their long coat-
tails—
It was lined with green baize, handsome,
and studded with bright brass nails—
More than all to the stranger was the
pew where he used to sit—
They filled it once with a household,
now he knew not a face in it.
But, as he looked, he saw there brothers
and sisters true
All in their order duly ranged in the
old church pew ;
Here at the door the father, guiding
his flock with a look,
Each in his Sunday raiment, each with
a well-clasped book,
While the pale mother sat at the farther
end, and he,
The youngest, cuddled beside her, or
nestled him on her knee.
Wet or dry, they must be there,
morning and afternoon,
Ere the bell had ceased to tinkle, or
the clerk gave out the tune ;

And woe to him that came late, or
who drowsily slept a wink,
Or lost a head of the sermon, or dared
of his play to think,
Or fidgeted for a moment, weary of
stiff constraint !
It all came back on him now, with
humour and pathos blent,
And a something moist in his eye that
somehow dimmed his view,
As he thought, where now are they all
that sat in the old church pew ?
Some at the ends of the earth, some
farther even than they—
Low in the quiet graves, by the surf-
beaten sandy bay.
Then he drew himself up, and muttered,
Pshaw ! why should I yield to this ?
I am a man of the world, and not a
sentimental miss ?

I tell the tale as he told it me in the
parlour inn at night,
As we sat and smoked together by a
guttering candle-light.

After sitting well-nigh for an hour, he
said, with a mind to go,
Could I only have seen my way, but
the close-packed throng said No ;
There was not room for an eel to
wiggle itself outside,
So I shifted and shifted my legs, and
a change of torture tried ;
That was the most you could hope for,
one side or other must be
Prickly and stinging, or cramped and
dead from the foot to the knee ;
At last the minister entered, a hand-
some fellow enough,
Not like the country lout I had known
in his homespun rough ;
Butterfly is not less like its caterpillar
than he
Looked like the memory of him I'd
carried about with me.

Then he was ruddy and strong, and
 now he was pale and thin—
 Was it with brooding of thought, or
 penance endured for sin?
 Spectacled too, though once he had
 seen like a bird of prey
 That from its rock-nest watches the
 near and the far away;
 Whiskers trimmed to a hair, and hair
 in a wavy curl,
 While every tooth in his mouth was
 white as a several pearl.
 He had the cleverest hands, too, alive
 to their finger-tips,
 Could make them speak to you plainly
 as ever he did with his lips:
 And his voice was mellow and deep,
 and clear and full as a bell,
 And touched in the higher tones a
 passionate thrill and swell.
 Perfect in rhetoric truly, verging on
 something more,
 Could he only have boldly ventured,
 and cut right into the core;
 Not much amiss with the thought too,
 or wrong in the argument,
 Could he only have once forgotten he
 had to be eloquent.

He read like a man who well had
 conned the words that he read,
 Giving the meaning clear; and his
 prayers were fine, they said:
 Likely I am no judge, but I thought
 them a shade too fine;
 Rhetoric is not for God, any more than
 are pearls for swine.
 The voice, too, was more than the
 thought; and I asked myself some-
 times, What
 Can any one find there, now, for his
 voice to be quavering at?
 But prayers, I allow, are not a kind
 of literature
 In which I can boast any skill, or quite
 of my taste be sure;

Only one fancies, if earth and its praise
 could be left out of view,
 And the soul looked straight up to
 God—well, its words would be
 simple and few,
 While his were many and dainty, and
 every one said they were fine.
 Perhaps they were real: who knows?
 but I could not quite use them
 as mine.

Then he gave out his text from the
 Psalm: "The fool hath said in
 his heart,
 No God!" and after a pause, with a
 stroke of excellent art,
 Repeated the three words "Fool!—
 No God!" 'mid a breathless
 awe—

An orator's trick, of course, yet a
 palpable hit, one saw.

Pity he did not stop there; just that
 look, that tone!

Why, they were in themselves a
 sermon, had they only been left
 alone

To hint their many suggestions. But
 some men have a way

Of not knowing when to stop, and of
 unsaying what they say.

That would have been the effect of his
 eloquence then upon me,

Had the sermon ever been finished,
 which it was not fated to be.

For mainly it was but a weft of Paley,
 and woof of Paul,

Calico-printed with anecdotes, wholly
 apocryphal,

Of Shelley and Hume and Voltaire,
 set forth with manifest trick,

Clever enough in its way, of artfullest
 rhetoric.

Not that there were not at times touches
 of something higher,

When the man's own soul broke out,
 with gleams of a central fire,

Through the crust of his pulpiteering ;
 also there were some strokes
 Of a grim satirical humour—they were
 not exactly jokes,
 More like Elijah's biting scorn of the
 Prophets of Baal,
 Or the ring of the spear of Ithuriel,
 smiting the steel-clasped mail
 Of Satan. They were the bits of the
 sermon that I liked best :
 I seemed to look on the devil discom-
 fitted then with a jest
 Wholly sincere and natural. But that
 only came now and then ;
 And after a while I was wishing me
 home at mine inn again,
 With that latest volume of Spencer's,
 and wondering what came next,
 When something went crack ! some-
 where, as the minister quoted his
 text
 To clench a paragraph with ; and
 surely the gallery swayed
 Forward a bit, and the startled crowd
 rose up dismayed.
 A horrible moment that, when murder-
 ous panic appears,
 That tramples on pity, and heeds not
 grey hairs or the tenderest years,
 Nor kith nor kin nor aught, but the
 wretched self it would save,
 At the cost of its better self, from the
 coward-dreaded grave !
 They had sprung to their feet, and
 stood a moment in breathless
 fear,
 So silent that out on the roof the rain
 was plain to hear
 Which now was heavily falling ; and
 then there arose a scream
 That curdled the blood in the heart,
 and I saw, as it were in a dream,
 Faces of men and women ghastly with
 terror, and all
 The galleries swaying, I fancied, away
 from the solid wall.

But ere the fatal rush, the minister
 lifted high
 A tremulous hand to heaven — a
 jewelled one, by the by—
 And sang, in a loud, clear voice, one
 verse of a well-known psalm,
 Joined in by some few near, which
 brought back a moment's calm ;
 Then he cried out, " Do not fear ; not
 a hair of your heads shall fall
 If you do as I bid ; for God has given
 me the lives of all.
 Let no one stir, till I tell you the doors
 are opened wide,
 Then silently go, while I pray that
 the Lord may meet with us
 outside."
 That wrought like a spell on them ; he
 was not like a man inspired,
 Yet the people gravely and silently did
 as he had desired,
 Slow moving along the aisles, and down
 by the narrow stair,
 Out by the several doors, and into the
 open air,
 In their disciplined self-command
 which their faith to them had given.
 Meanwhile in the pulpit he kept pray-
 ing for them to heaven,
 Not at all " fine prayers " now, but
 the downright honest cry
 Of a man who longed and hoped that
 the poor folk might not die.
 I did not hurry myself, for I did not
 lose my head ;
 But when the last had vanished, I drew
 a long breath, and said,
 " Well done, Parson and people !
 That was a sight to see,
 And better than any preachment the
 man could have preached to me."
 For as they stood outside, ere taking
 their homeward ways,
 They sang to the Shepherd whose
 mercy had followed them all their
 days.

Then, when the church was empty,
 straight into the vestry he went
 By the door behind the pulpit, and I
 followed him, for I meant
 Partly to compliment him on the ready
 wit he had shown,
 Partly to claim acquaintance, as a friend
 in the days long gone.
 But he hailed me at once by name, for
 mine was the one face he knew,
 So he said, in the thronging crowd, as
 he glanced from pew to pew;
 And where had I been? and had I
 come back to the old Home again,
 After long years of wandering far in
 the sun and the rain?
 And was he not glad to meet me, and
 to recall the times
 When we pored over Homer and
 Euclid, or hammered our brains for
 rhymes?
 It was pleasant to get such a greeting
 —so cordial, cheery, and frank—
 Like what you may find in your banker,
 when your balance is good at the
 bank.
 I was yielding then to the kindly feeling
 we have for those
 We have known at school or at college;
 and, thinking of hardish blows
 And rough horse-play he had borne
 from some of us then, I felt
 Some twinges of sharp regret, and my
 heart was beginning to melt,
 When there passed across his features
 a smile as of self-content,
 And I stayed the relenting mood, till
 I found out what it meant.
 "Now, tell me," he said, "was that
 not a right smart stroke of mine,
 To sing that verse of a psalm which
 they all knew, line by line?
 It saved some score of their lives, and
 will be a good thing too for me,
 For the crowds will be bigger than
 ever wherever I happen to be.

It was quite an impromptu thought, an
 inspiration plain,
 Like a burst of sunshine gleaming out
 of the clouds and rain;
 A minute more, and the throng would
 have trampled the old and the weak,
 Though I was not very much frightened
 —old joisting is apt to creak,
 And seats will crack with a weight
 they have not borne for years;
 But how people lose their heads, to be
 sure, in their panic fears!
 It is lucky for me, however. Some-
 how, I was losing my hold
 Of the folk, and my tellingest hits
 seemed to fall on them lifeless and
 cold;
 And there needed much advertising—
 which means a heavy expense—
 To gather a crowd worth speaking to,
 even on Sabbath. Hence
 I was thinking what could be done—
 it must be striking and new—
 To waken their interest in the things
 that are right and true.
 But this now will set me up quite; they
 will talk of it all through the week,
 And I shall have congratulations, and
 invitations to speak
 Every evening at meetings in town and
 village, when they
 Read in the morning paper what
 happened in church to-day.
 "I never could settle down to a mill-
 horse round," he said,
 "Of writing a weekly sermon, and
 visiting each sick-bed,
 Catechising the children, and comfort-
 ing them that mourn,
 Blessing the young folk's weddings,
 and christening their babes when born.
 I tried it, of course, for a while; but
 I very soon came to see,
 Though it might be all right for some
 folk, it was not the work for me.

Would you yoke your racehorse to a
plough? My calling was clearly to
preach,

To put new fire in our pulpits, and
rouse every heart I could reach

By the art of the Orator, skilled to
move now, and now to persuade,
Leaving the task of the pastor to men
of a commoner grade.

Therefore, I have to be popular, have
to be followed by throngs,

And to hit at the sins of Dives, cry
out at the poor man's wrongs,

And drop the hum-drum of the pulpit,
and maybe to startle men's ears—

For no one would heed what I said,
if I did not bring laughter or
tears.

Does it win any souls for God? you
are fain to know; does it make

Men's lives any purer and truer? or
souls from their bondage break,

And walk in the freedom of Right?
Who knows? It is ours to sow

The seed of the kingdom; and God,
He only can make it to grow.

I leave that to Him. Now and then,
in the heat or the hush of a crowd,

One will go off in a faint, and one will
take to screaming aloud;

But if their lives are bettered, I wot
not. In every fight

There are scores of bullets that miss,
for one that kills outright.

No doubt the vanities flourish, and sins
are not less rife;

I plant and water, but man cannot
quicken to newness of life.

Why do I yet hold on to a fruitless
task? But is it

So fruitless, sir, after all? These folk
will remember my visit

Here now, and talk of that psalm, I
believe, till the day they die.

You would wonder how many things
happen to make them reckon that I

Am surely a chosen vessel whom it
will be good to hear.

So, God has often sustained me, when
my heart was faint with fear,

And made me feel that He means me
still to be doing His work,

Dealing out bread to the hungry, and
rousing a slumbering Kirk.

"Yet I admit there are times when
doubts do trouble me sore.

'Tis not like a full day's work, this
preaching an hour or more,

And I don't write sermons often—the
old ones do as well

When the place is new, and it's likely
there's no one there could tell

If they be old or new. Much study
is hard on me, too,

And I have to be careful of health.

Life is precious. But if you knew
My thoughts now and then, you would

not envy this popular fame
Which musters its thousands just at the

trumpet-call of my name.
For oft when I take up one of these

sermons so carefully writ,
All of them yellow with use, and

glance at an eloquent bit,
Meant for some passing event, which

told very well at the time,
The pathos seems to have vanished, and

it sounds without reason or rhyme,
And I ask myself, How will it look,

when the reckoning comes, to say,
There, that's all the fruit of my vine-

yard—the harvest of my poor day?
Five score, more or less, of old

sermons! And then, when my
spirits were low,

I have wished I had stuck to the croft
where my father made barley to grow

Instead of the rush and the ling. But
of course, that was foolish, and came

Of a jaded mind, and the strong recoil
of an o'er-tasked frame

Strained by emotional fervour. No, I
can never repent

Choosing the grandest of missions, on
which the Apostles were sent,

To preach the great gospel of peace.—

I know not if you will care
To wait on the afternoon sermon?"

I told him I could not be there ;
But I would remember the plate—The
workman was worthy his hire—

So we parted, never to meet, at least
if I get my desire.

What a life that fellow must live ! half
knowing himself for the lie

That he is, like the old Roman augurs
that joked at their craft on the sly ;

But he has not even that help to relieve
his troubled mind,

He must try to believe he believes,
and therein his comfort find.

Hard for a small pretender to be
preaching a faith that hates

Hypocrites more than downright
sinners, and nothing abates

For one's poor circumstances, but will
have a man to play

The hero, who has not a touch of the
hero to moisten his clay.

Yes, I am sorry for him. How well
now he managed that job—

The singing and praying, and slow
clearing out of the terrified mob !

I wish that I had not gone after him
into the vestry ; so

I might have believed in him now,—
for it is not good to know

That your very worst thoughts of men
are the truest after all.

And when you've painted a hero,
'twere best turn his face to the wall :

You made him, and, if you would keep
him, you must not look closely at him,

Though, I grant you, that life feels
poor when the glow and the glory
grow dim.

Ah well ! I gave him his hire—to
put in the plate, no doubt—
But I'd give it him ten times over not
to have found him out.

RUGGLES, THE SALVATIONIST

NAY, nobody converted me ;
I was not struck down by a sermon,
And brought my evil way to see,
And on the better way determine.

I did not drop by happy chance
Into some "Bethel" or "Little Salem,"
To be arrested all at once,
And get up in a pew, and tell 'em.

Nor did some precious preacher meet
My arguments with words in season,
And bring me home in triumph sweet,
The trophy of his cogent reason.

Good Christians did not sing nor say
Their joyful hallelujahs o'er me,
Nor did their magazines display
The work of grace that did restore me.

I did not feel the sin of doubt,
Nor haunt, like daws, the church and
steeple,
I did not turn me inside out
For pleasure of the pious people.

I could not do it. Why should one,
With open wound, be fain to show it,
And spread his heart out in the sun,
That folk may stare, and flies may
blow it ?

I don't deny that some may find
Their sure way home in such a
manner ;
But I was never of a mind
To march beneath that kind of banner.

I had not sinned the common way,
I never was a base deceiver,
I ne'er was in a drunken fray:
I simply was an unbeliever.

But look here; had you loved a maid,
Sweet-natured and sweet-nurtured,
saintly,
Who lowly to the Father prayed,
And told Him all her troubles quaintly,

And had you set yourself to sap
The faith by which she lived serenely,
And round her shrinking soul to wrap
Poor rags of doubt, that clothed her
meanly,

How would you feel, if one day she
Gave back your thoughts in harder
fashion,
Of saintly things made mockery,
And fired your doubts with eager
passion?

Would it not give you pause, at least,
And make your faithless purpose falter,
If you should hear the white-robed
priest
Break out blaspheming at the altar?

Yes, you had worked for that, perhaps;
Yet now 'tis come, you feel it shocking,
And shudder at so strange a lapse,
As if some fiend your soul were
mocking.

I had not thought how much her faith
Had gone to make her perfect beauty,
Nor what a change would come by
death
Of that which was her soul of duty.

And I who loved her so, by way
Of mending, marred God's fairest
daughter,
Who lately on His bosom lay
Like water-lily on its water.

She echoed now my thoughts, and I,
The more she spake them, shrank to
hear them;

She thought to pleasure me thereby,
And made me only loathe, and fear
them.

And then she sickened, and so died,
Without a word of better cheering,
As drifting on a sunless tide,
And in a black cloud disappearing.

O God! what horror fell on me!
What anguish of a heart still aching,
Hidden by day that none might see,
But when the night came, like to
breaking!

I knew what Hell was then, all night
As I lay sleepless, moaning, sighing,
And could not wish to dwell in light,
If she were in the darkness lying.

And in that passion of grief I felt
What shallow thoughts I had been
airing,
Seeing them now like snowflakes melt
In depths of infinite despairing.

I had deserved this;—it was right;
A wrecker, I had served my Master,
And piled up high a blazing light
For luring souls on to disaster.

For she whom I had loved so well,
For whom my life I would have
given,
False-beaconed by that light of
Hell,
Had lost the guiding star of Heaven.

Therefore I took my lonely way,
Through clouds of thunder-darkness
groping,
And often like one dead I lay,
Alike unfeeling and unhoping.

Some tried to comfort me and spake
Of healing for the chief of sinners ;
Some fain my settled gloom would
break,
By bidding me to balls and dinners.

What matter, whether false or true,
The word I heard from each new
comer ?
Their fleeces might be dank with dew,
But mine must be as dust in summer.

In vain they reasoned with my mood,
In vain a better hope unlifted,
On one thing only I could brood—
The soul that into darkness drifted.

I clung unto my sharp remorse,
And would not have its anguish lighter,
But ever as it stung me worse,
I clasped it to my bosom tighter.

Still wrapt in dismal thought I stood,
And from its gloom my light would
borrow ;
It seemed my only sign of good,
That I could feel such bitter sorrow.

And so I took my lonely way
In utter sadness and forsaking,
I could not hope, I could not pray,
I could not see a dim day-breaking.

How could I for my sin atone,
Except by suffering and dying ?
How could I think of her, alone
And wretched, with the outcast lying ?

If she were there, there I must be,
And by her side my soul must languish,
Draining her cup of misery,
And wringing out its dregs of anguish.

I ought to die, and die in sin,
Without a gleam of light to cheer me,
My only hope that I might win
A place where she would still be near me.

And one night, sitting by the hearth,
Which had no fire, but ashes only,
A wet wind wailing o'er the earth,
Eerie and dreary, and bleak and lonely,

I thought to make an end of this,
And know the worst that could befall
me ;
When, lo ! I seemed to feel her kiss,
And hear her fond voice softly call me :

“ Be still, although thy heart may bleed,
Take up thy load of life and bear it,
Christ did not come to frame a creed,
But to reveal the Father's Spirit.”

And as I heard, that message dropt
Dewy and sweet on my heart's throb-
bing ;
And ere its tender accents stopt,
I like a little child was sobbing.

I've not been deemed a saint since then,
Well found in orthodox opinion,
But I have loved my fellow-men,
And o'er my thoughts held strict
dominion,

And hope that somehow all is well,
That all will one day yet be righted,
That none in hopeless darkness dwell
Who may not yet with joy be lighted.

For God is greater than His Word,
His love is like a flowing river,
His voice in all things good is heard,
His Mercy doth endure for ever.

HERR PROFESSOR KUPFER-NICKEL

THE lecture hall was filled with youth—
Pencil and notebook ready—some
Still, as in thoughtful search of truth,
Some noisy as an empty drum ;

Here one was bearded like a goat,
 Another was some mother's pet,
 With gay cravat and dandy coat,
 And face smooth as a baby's yet.
 A seed-plot this of fruitful thought,
 A graveyard, too, of hopes and
 schemes,

Where some shall grow, and some
 shall rot,

And some shall prove but idle dreams.

I sat me down ; and by and by
 Came from behind the bema, brisk,
 A little man with clear blue eye,
 And giving his stiff gown a whisk,
 Tripped up, and spread his lecture out
 On the low desk ; then all was hushed,
 As he, complacent, looked about,
 And we expectant were, and crushed.

A small, brisk man, with little head,
 But yet compact, well-shaped, and
 round ;

And in his face there was no shade,
 And in his voice no tremulous sound ;
 Features well chiselled, not one blunt ;
 Thin-lipped, and with a fighting air ;
 As keen to bear the battle's brunt,
 And nothing for his foeman care,
 With scorn for all who might resist
 His confident thoughts, and daring
 flights

Into the realm of cloud and mist,
 To fill it with new patent lights :

An able little man, and yet
 Not able quite for what he tried,
 Who had no doubt, and no regret,
 Nor haunting shadow at his side :
 Unconscious of the Mystery—
 The cross-light of a higher will—
 His ableness was plain to see,
 His littleness was plainer still.

So standing there, he said, " Our course
 Of scientific search has been
 To purge you first, without remorse,
 Of cobwebs, and to sweep them clean,

And let the daylight in. But man
 Must have some faith on which to live,
 Some purpose in his thoughts and plan,
 Which clearness to his world shall give.
 I call it faith ; but 'tis, indeed,
 Only large reason bodying forth
 What lies enfolded in the seed
 We have been sowing. From the earth
 We clear away the former wreck,
 And cart the rubbish out of sight,
 Then straightway to our tools we take,
 To build anew, and build aright.
 No soul can stay on vacancy,
 Or on mere blank negations feed,
 And though we cease to bow the knee,
 We may not cease to have a Creed :
 And this is how I shape to me
 The new faith from the novel seed.

" We grow from less to more ; we rise
 From vital cells, by ordered schisms,
 To intricate complexities
 Of fine and subtle organisms—

A tadpole now with breathing gills,
 Then lizard fit for land or lake,
 And by and by an ape that skills
 The husk of milky nut to break.
 And just as if great Nature kept
 Her moulds, that we might learn her
 ways,

And how she wrought, and never slept,
 But grew through all the years and
 days,

These phases of the coming race,
 These stages of the shaping Past,
 We in the unborn babe may trace
 That cheers some lonely home at last.
 So doth she keep her records true,
 Repeating in each life on earth
 What man hath been, and how he grew
 To fulness of his higher birth.

" Why should we be ashamed to own
 Our humble kindred in the Past ?
 Why scorn the seedling that hath grown
 Into so great a tree at last ?

Shall we not love all creatures more
That they are of our flesh and blood,
And that our ancestors of yore
Squatted upon the oozy mud,
Or floated, pulsing, in the sea
Which brought forth every living thing,
Or chattered on the cocoa tree,
And nestled where the palm-leaves
spring?

For life is one and manifold,
And all spring from the self-same roots,
And we are ripe and growing old,
And these are but the tender shoots.

“Our Eden—’twas some moor or fen,
Or rolling prairie at the best,
The savage haunt of savage men
Homeless and naked, like the rest
Of Nature’s products; only they
Were creatures of a larger brain,
Fitter on earth to make their way,
And from the earth its wealth to gain.
So, scheming brain and cunning hand
Fashioned the flint-tool sharp and good,
And smote the wild beast on the land,
And hewed the oak tree in the wood.
They made them snares for fish and
bird,

For hunger sharpened all their wits,
And imitating sounds they heard
For lures—the shrewdest of their hits—
They framed at length articulate speech
From owls and cats and wolves and
rooks,
Or seamew shrilling on the beach,
Or song-bird by the murmuring brooks.
Then from the flint one stole the fire,
And blew the spark into a flame
Which gave him all his heart’s desire,
And shaped his path to power and fame.

“He found the wild spark in the flint,
And tinder in the dry rush-pith,
He found that thorns would burn by
dint
Of blowing, and he was—a smith,

And wrenched the iron from the stone,
And fused it with his subtle spark,
Or lit the lamp, when day was done,
And made a new day in the dark.
With fire he offered sacrifice,
When he his gods would please or
thank,

And baked the flesh, and boiled the rice,
And with the gods he ate and drank.
He worshipped it, yet made it work,
And be his slave, and serve him well;
He did not shut it in a kirk,
And call men to it with a bell;
But made it sail upon the sea,
And snort along the iron road,
And weave and knit for him; and be
The lifter of his heavy load,
Until he learned, at length, that he
Himself was Lord of all, and God.

“A long and troubled way he had
Ere thus he came to clearest light;
At times, his fancies drove him mad,
And he was in an evil plight:
At times through swamps of pious slush
The ague-stricken soul must wade;
Or hew a path through briar and bush
By tangling metaphysics made;
At times his leaders led him wrong,
Or only right a mile or twain;
But still the instinct, deep and strong,
Unconscious brought him back again—
Back to the bellows and the fire,
Back to the anvil and the tool,
Back to his inner heart’s desire,
And to the force that gave him rule.
They fabled he was chained to rocks,
And tortured by the frost and ice,
And beaten by the tempest shocks
On the sharp-pointed precipice,
And torn by hungry birds of prey,
And bleached and blanched by sun
and rain,
As he in proud defiance lay
Through days and nights of racking
pain.

Yet is he lord of earth and air,
 And that high power to him was given
 To reign as Master everywhere,
 By stealing of the fire from heaven.
 So true the fable which averred
 Fire made him rival of the gods,
 For where the bickering flame is heard,
 Man rules, and Jove supinely nods.
 The Greek saw deeper than the Jew,
 In myth of high far-reaching kind
 He shadowed forth the grand and true
 Discoveries of the modern mind.

“Materialist? why not? Who knows
 What subtle powers of life and thought
 Lie in an atom, hidden close
 To-day, but ere long to be brought,
 Like music, from it by the touch
 Of the night-wind upon a string?
 Words frighten fools, like ghosts, but
 such

No terrors to the wise can bring.
 Lo! matter is a crystal here,
 A self-made rhomb, or octagon,
 And there a dewdrop, like a tear
 Wept, silent, when the day is done,
 A flower, an odour in the air,
 A gleam of light, blue-vaulted skies,
 A rainbow arching high and fair—
 Why not a thought, too, good and
 wise?

Why should not brain deposit thought?
 They're not more alien and unlike
 Than what from many a gland is got,
 Or fire that from the flint we strike,
 Or currents of electric force,
 That acids make with metals twain.
 No need to seek another source
 Of thought beyond the thinking brain.
 We deal with facts; there's no such
 thing

As spirit; that is out of date;
 Molecular tremors clearly bring
 The light which metaphysics hate.
 Who ever saw a soul? or who
 Can tell its strength or shape or size

Or weight or taste or smell or hue?
 And who its parts can analyse?
 Enough that we have larger brain,
 And that we are no longer dumb,
 And that the furnace burns amain,
 And that we have a proper thumb.
 And for the rest, all men must die:
 Yet man shall live for evermore,
 His growing purpose soaring high,
 The only God he can adore—
 Humanity!—the noblest growth
 Of nature, and its lord and king,
 Its servant and its master both,
 The sum and crown of everything.”
 Musing, I rose, as he once more
 Tripped from the bema, looking brisk,
 And as he vanished through the door
 Giving his gown another whisk,
 Self-satisfied that he had shed
 A light that left no shadows, no
 Unanswered questions in the head,
 No aching in the heart to know,
 Whence all the longing of the mind
 For more than hard material gain,
 And clinging of the nobler kind
 To mysteries even of grief and pain,
 That fruit in spiritual riches, far
 Transcending wealth of wine and oil,
 Ingot of gold, and silver bar,
 And corn and all results of toil.
 Did Shakespeare's pregnant utterance
 bring
 Its wealth of words from owls and
 cats?
 Did Dante's musical pathos spring
 From squeaking of the mice and rats?
 And whence the life that from the cell
 Grows up in forms so manifold?
 And what, if earth whereon we dwell
 Shall be burnt up, as sages hold?
 Where then the man that shall be
 God,
 The God that must be man alone,
 When he and all whereon he trod,
 And all his homes and graves are
 gone?

I heed not of a creed like this ;
 It is too shallow even to hold
 The great facts of the life that is,
 And fit them in its little mould ;
 And how much less its glimmering light
 Can pierce the unfathomed depths
 within,
 Or search for us the Infinite,
 Or mysteries of death and sin !
 It leaves more questions on the mind
 Than all it seems to answer clear ;
 And darker is the cloud behind
 From the sharp light that shineth near.
 I know the life which now we live
 Is still becoming something more,
 Yet must I evermore believe
 In One to love and to adore,
 Who unto all did Being give,
 And Law they were created for.

A DREAM

I DREAMT a dream. I dreamt that
 God was dead,
 And that we all met for His burial—
 Angels and men and devils—and sang
 or said
 An awestruck Requiescat o'er the head
 Of Him who was the Father of us all.

Dreams have their logic and con-
 gruities ;
 Granted the starting-point, and all
 the rest
 Flows, like our fables of the birds
 and trees,
 In spite of reason ; and the dreamer sees
 No strangeness, even when they are
 eeriest.

Methought all lights of heaven were
 quenched, yet light
 There was, but coming from another
 sphere,

A lurid glimmer, and a ghastly sight ;
 And horrid moanings filled the dis-
 mal night,
 And there were earthquakes shuddering
 far and near.

A while we sat in silence, as the way
 At funerals is, or whispered 'neath
 our breath,
 With furtive glance, and faces hard
 and grey,
 And silent wonder who was meet
 to pray
 A fitting prayer at this world-darken-
 ing death.

Then Satan strode to the chief
 mourner's place,
 Though Michael frowned, and Gabriel
 blocked his path,
 And Moses lifted up his grand,
 meek face,
 As on that day of shame and
 deep disgrace
 When he the tables brake in holy
 wrath.

"Silence!" the tempter cried ; "is
 this a time
 For family quarrels? 'Tis my right-
 ful due,
 I am the eldest born. Is it a crime
 That I should sorrow most for
 that sublime
 First Cause whom I have grieved far
 more than you ?

"I am the Prodigal, 'tis true. What
 then ?
 Must I be always of the same wrong
 mind !
 Is there repentance for the sons of men,
 And fatted calves when they come
 back again,
 And only swine's husks still for me
 to find ?

"I have more cause for sorrow than
you all

Who stayed at home, and did as you
were bid,

But, ever since my most unhappy fall,
I've always meant some day up here
to call,

And be forgiven for all the ill I did.

"And now it is too late. I've
often heard

That said by some poor fool at
my suggestion,

But never quite knew how his heart
was stirred,

Till now; and really 'tis an ugly
word,

Sour in the mouth, and bitter of
digestion.

"Your grief is not like mine. You've
lost a friend

Who loved you, but you never vexed
His heart,

As I have done. Can you not then
extend

Pity for one who has some ways
to mend,

And some bad memories of a
guilty Past?

"That's the worst of a day like this;
they buzz

Like wasps — these memories — and
their sting is sore,

And like the Patriarch when he came
from Uz,

They won't go back—nothing un-
pleasant does—

But cling to you, and sting you more
and more.

"I can't deny that I have told
some lies,

And done some things I never should
have done;

But is there any who is always wise?
And I was wroth to forfeit such a prize,
And, when you lose your temper,
all is gone.

"You have believed me sometimes
when I lied,
Can't you believe me now I speak
the truth?

You ought to know how hard it is
for pride

To say, I'm sorry. But I wish
to abide

Once more among the old friends of
my youth.

"Have you no kindness for me? Yes,
I know,

I am blunt-spoken, have not your
smooth tongues,

Am out of the way of singing hymns
that flow

Like rippling waters murmuring soft
and low;—

In our place we have need of all
our lungs.

"You will not? You Impeccables!
But you,

At least, who were my friends and
followers once,

Ye men of faith who now are good
and true,

Though all my arts and wiles ye, one
time, knew,

Ah! ye will not refuse me this
last chance?

"What! not a word? you're all in
the same boat,

And none of you believe I can repent?
Well; it is somewhat hard, and might
be thought

Scarce creditable to those of you
who taught

Some tricks to me, for which I
now relent.

"But I am sorry none the less, I say,
For what has happened to the Great
First Cause,
Who never lost faith in the righteous
way,
Nor in the Love which was His
light of day
Where'er He walked, and Lord and
Master was.

"It might be weak, but surely it
was good—
Most goodness is a trifle weak,
no doubt,
Especially if longer than you should
You still persist in your so virtuous
mood,
And will not trim your sail, and
veer about.

"Well; He was truly better than
you all,
For He could pity one when at
the worst,
Though pity, I confess, brings com-
fort small
To one whose back is fairly at the wall,
Beaten and baffled and hated and
accursed.

"No matter; now my way of life
is dim,
Stupid and without interest any more.
'Twas He that kept you—cherub
and seraphim—
Out of my toils, and were it not for Him,
I should have trapped you daily by
the score.

"There's no use for a Devil now,
since He
Is gone; 'twould be like shadow
without light;
Only where light is can the shadow be,
It was His presence that occasioned me,
And by my wrong I perfected His right.

"But now my task is done. 'Tis not
worth while
Planning and plotting for the like of you.
What gives its zest to any clever wile
Is the uncertain match of truth with
guile;
That gone, there's nothing worth one's
while to do.

"The prize once sure is nothing—let
it go,
The fisher cares not for the fish he
snares;
Only to find if he can master so
The cunning that contends with his,
or no,
He throws his line, and pities not nor
spares.

"But you without Him! 'Tis poor
sport indeed
Gulling what comes so ready to one's
hand,
Wasting fine wit where wit you do
not need,
And plying arts to sow the wild rank
weed,
Which, without art, grows native in
the land.

"Life will not be worth living any more,
And for a change, what if I preached
to you,
And told you to be good, and to adore
His memory whom you trembled at
before?
That would be rare sport now, and
something new.

"It's not the first time that I've
preached indeed,
Very good preaching too and orthodox,
Exalting still the faith above the deed;
And how men did devour my words
with greed,
And went away, and sinned like other
folks!"

He stood erect, a mocking spirit bold,
 Having no faith in aught but craft
 and lies,
 And full of scorn that bitter was
 and cold,
 And good and bad in like contempt
 did hold,
 And even himself did fitfully despise.

Then a voice cried, "There shall be
 no more light,
 The war is ended, evil is supreme";
 But I was fain to wrestle for the right,
 And beaded drops of anguish dimmed
 my sight—
 Then I awoke, and lo! it was a dream.

I woke up, with a trembling sense
 of guilt
 Upon me, as if that wild dream, profane
 And blasphemous, must surely have
 been built
 Of some vile matter in my heart that
 dwelt,
 By some base spirit lurking in my brain.

But as I brooded on it there appeared
 Another meaning slowly breaking
 through
 The lurid light, and horrid sounds,
 and weird
 Wild phantasms of my dream; and as
 it cleared
 Peace came to me again, and comfort
 grew.

I had been reading far into the night
 That "ultimate analysis of things
 Can find no need of God, nor any light
 Shed, by the thought of Infinite wisdom
 and might,
 On the large world which Law to
 order brings."

"No need of this hypothesis," one writ;
 And the free fancy, roving like the wind

Untrammelled, shaped my dream, and
 guided it
 With strange, unconscious reason, and
 flash of wit
 Too daring for the common day o'
 th' mind.

No need of God for science! But
 our life
 Is more than knowledge, and hath
 other needs,
 When sorrows come, and troubles too
 are rife,
 Or good and evil wrestle in hot strife,
 And the heart fails, and wounded
 virtue bleeds.

Truly he said, though he that said
 it still
 Is father of all lies, that we should be
 The easy victims of his crafty skill,
 Were there no God to strengthen heart
 and will,
 And guide the soul through its
 perplexity.

'Tis not the making of the worlds
 alone
 That calls for His wise thought, and
 shaping hand,
 To frame the atom, and compact the
 stone,
 And breathe a mystic life through flesh
 and bone,
 And stretch the heavens above the
 solid land.

There be more lawless and rebellious
 powers
 Than ordered matter, which need
 government
 And guidance more than growth of
 plants and flowers,
 Even these same wayward, wilful hearts
 of ours,
 Deceitful, that on evil ways are bent.

And when our steps have spurned the
appointed course
Of duty, and sunk in miry slough of sin,
And guilty fears rush on us with the
force
Of billows, who shall heal our keen
remorse,
And, speaking mercy, bring back
peace within?

With lightsome heart, as if it were
a thing
Too trifling to regret, one says to me,
I have no prayer to pray, no praise
to sing,
Nor sacrifice nor offering do I bring,
There is no living God, and man is free.

Ah! better to be smitten day by day—
For there is comfort in His staff and
rod—
Than wander in that mist, and lose
thy way
Among the crags and chasms that
grimly say,
No need so great now as thy need
of God.

MORAL-SUBLIME

SAKYA-MOUNIE one day saw a tiger,
Shrunk i' the flanks, his staring rib-
bones bare,
Creep from the jungle, shuddering as
if rigor
Of famine-stricken death had seized
him there.

A splendid creature, but for pinching
hunger,
With huge forearm, and ravenous
white-toothed jaws,
Branded with beauty, when his days
were younger,
But age had somewhat blunted teeth
and claws.

Then said the Buddha; "Lo! this
beast ferocious,
Devouring me, shall straight grow mild
and meek,
And turn with horror from his deeds
atrocious,
His spirit gentle as his skin grows
sleek.

"For now he is a fell man-eating
villain,
Watching for women going to the well,
Waiting the lonely traveller to kill in
The quiet evening, in the lonely dell.

"But I shall be a graff in his wild
nature,
To sweeten all his blood, and change
his ways:
Wherefore I gladly offer the Creator
This ransom to redeem his evil days.

"If he go on as now, he'll grow
still wilder;
In him there is no spirit of sacrifice;
But, me devouring, he will soon turn
milder,
And part with all his fierce blood-
thirsty vice."

Laughing I read, half thinking that
he jested,
Though he was nowise of the jesting
kind;
And to the fancy which his thought
suggested
Awhile I yielded up a willing mind.

I pictured him, then, and the jungle-
tyrant,
Who scrupled not to smite him to
the ground,
And bear him off, lest haply some
aspirant
Might claim a share in that which he
had found.

Tigers, of course, have solitary habits,
And haunt where brown and yellow
leaves are strewn ;
They're not companionable beasts like
rabbits,
And much prefer to eat their meals
alone.

Weak as he was, and perishing with
hunger,
I saw him, with my mind's eye, take
a leap,
And, with a snort of pleasure or
of anger,
Bear off the Buddha to the nullah deep.

Did the poor victim feel the great
fangs in him,
As they tore through the jungle to
his lair ?
And only think, What matter, if I
win him
To pity those whom now he would
not spare ?

Or did he now repent, when it was
plainly
Too late to think of anything but
death ?
Or did he think of nothing, but was
mainly
Concerned to get a gasp of hurried
breath ?

The tiger had his meal—I'll not
describe it ;
These creatures are not nice—then
laid him down,
With good digestion slowly to imbibe it
Into his system well, from claw to
crown.

But there were some odd fragments—
not to harrow
Your feelings, for your flesh might
creep at this—

Them first he hid for breakfast on
the morrow,
Then stretched him out in perfect
tiger-bliss.

And as he slept, he dreamed—I do
not wonder,
Sure such a meal would set one
dreaming fast—
He dreamed another Buddha had
fallen under
His fangs, to be devoured too like
the last.

He dreamed of crunching bones to
reach the marrow,
Of his head buried in the softer part,
Of spurring blood that shot forth like
an arrow,
And of some dainty morsels near
the heart.

A horrid dream for one who had
been grafted
With a meek nature meant to sweeten
him ;
But he had tasted blood, and now he
quaffed it,
At pleasure, in a dream-world wild
and grim.

And on the morrow, not to waste his
treasure,
He raked it up, and had another
feast,
And then another dream, so doubling
pleasure,
As if he were a mere cud-chewing
beast.

No thought had he of growing soft
and tender,
Of sparing women going to the well,
Or being the poor traveller's defender
From other cats that in the jungle
dwell.

He had no touch of Buddha's gentle
spirit,
Nor any taste of chivalry at all ;
That ghastly murder seemed a deed
of merit,
To be repeated, nowise to appal.

The brute, no doubt, was hopelessly
ferocious,
To eat a Buddha full of love and ruth,
And only feel how much the deed
atrocious
Had reinforced the fierceness of his
youth.

So did I picture, as my fancy willed it,
The goodman and his fruitless sacrifice—
The blood he wasted, and the brute
that spilled it,
Having no thought of virtue or
of vice :

Having no wit, but just to stanch
his hunger
With juicy meat that pleased his
unspoilt taste,
And gave him pleasant sleep and made
him stronger
To hunt for prey about the jungle waste.

That was the touch too much—that
tiger story—
Which makes a caricature ridiculous,
Rubbing the tinsel pathos off and glory,
To tickle mirthful humour born in us.

Were one an owl upon the high barn
rafter
Staring in serious gravity, or Nun
That had forsworn the wanton trick
of laughter—
Then one might read, and fail to see
the fun.

But though I would behold with
reverence fitting
What sacred is to any soul on earth,

Yet this mad fooling of a mind,
unwitting
The humour of it, wakens mocking
mirth.

Moral-sublime ! nay, but the brain-
sick dreaming
Of mind diseased, which we could
pity, indeed,
Were we not challenged to admire
the seeming
Virtue that propped up a fantastic
creed.

And yet, perchance, like other tales
that wander
Down through the ages, this too has
been changed ;
Buddha may ne'er have thought his
life to squander
On the fierce brute that through the
jungle ranged.

But some poor scribbler, fain to exalt
his merit,
Some plodding dullard, guiltless of
a jest,
Thus fondly hoped to show the
Master's spirit,
And only his own folly well expressed.

So are the great and good ill under-
stood,
What time their Faith a dead tradition
grown,
And on the doctors and the schoolmen
stranded,
Breaks up, a wreck upon the sand
and stone.

They were not fools, those men, who
earth's distractions
Left for an aim that still our spirit
stirs :

Enough, to answer, only for their
actions,
Not for the stories of biographers.

MIRREN

SHE was but a maid of all work,
 For she could not bear to see
 Idle sluts about her kitchen
 Slopping tables with their tea ;
 And besides, she had a habit
 Of speaking out her mind
 Which might not look respectful
 If another stood behind ;
 For she'd scold a wasteful mistress
 Very roundly to her face,
 But would not let another
 Think a thought to her disgrace.

She had seen her fifty winters,
 But was always trim and tight
 In her printed cotton bodice,
 And her apron clean and white :
 Never knew her head a bonnet,
 But a cap of muslin thin
 With a bit of simple ribbon
 Tied in bows beneath her chin :
 And her features, small and puckered,
 Looking tempery and tart,
 Did not truly tell the secret
 Of her true and faithful heart.

All the folk that did not know her—
 And there were not many did,
 For her faults were somewhat patent,
 And her virtues mainly hid—
 Much disliked her prim preciseness,
 And her stiff unchanging ways,
 And the tartness of her sayings,
 And the scrimpsness of her praise.
 But the children, whom she rated
 If their boots had soiled her floor,
 Knew how fain she was to cheer them,
 When their little hearts were sore.

She had never left the city,
 Rarely seen the growing corn,
 Never been a five-miles' journey
 From the spot where she was born,

Never voyaged in a steamboat,
 Never travelled by the mail,
 And nothing could persuade her
 To go jaunting on the rail.
 But she knew the streets and closes,
 And the harbour and the boats,
 And the kindly fishers' houses,
 And their creels and nets and floats.

And all the grand old mansions
 Where the gentry once did dwell,
 With their cork-screw stairs and turrets,
 And their chambers panelled well,
 And the stately Lords and Ladies
 Who had ridden from their doors,
 And the fateful tragic dramas
 Oft enacted on their floors,—
 She could tell you stories of them,
 Till a feeling in you woke
 That the nobles must have sorrows
 Not allowed to common folk.

Going weekly to the market,
 You might safely trust her care
 Not to squander one halfpenny
 Of your thrifty monies there ;
 She would have the best and cheapest,
 Yet she would not chaffer long ;
 They might cheat a young housekeeper,
 But they feared her caustic tongue ;
 Nor would she for a moment
 Linger in the sun or rain ;
 She had gone to do her business,
 And must home to work again.

Going weekly to the Kirk too,
 Be the Sunday dry or wet,
 With her Bible in her kerchief,
 And her features primly set,
 There she sat in tireless patience,
 Thinking less about her sin
 Than about her common duties,
 And the frets she had therein,
 Not unpleased that she had done them
 With some credit to herself,
 And with visions of her saucepans
 All in order on their shelf.

One day she told her mistress,
 She must find another maid :
 No, she had no fault to find with
 Any thing they did or said,
 And she was not like the fickle
 Fools that wanted just a change,
 Nor did she much rebel at
 That new-fangled kitchen range ;
 And she had not made her mind up
 To take a place or no ;
 There was nothing she was sure of,
 Only just that she must go.

Plainly there was something hidden ;
 There was mystery in her look ;
 But she pursed her lips, and held it
 Tight as in a close-sealed book.
 They wist not, when she left them,
 What had wiled her thus away,
 Puzzling over it, and guessing
 Twenty different things a day ;
 They were angry, for they missed her,
 Nothing seeming to go smooth ;
 But the pathos of it touched them,
 When they came to know the truth.

She had served a gentlewoman,
 When they both were fresh and young ;
 They had smiled and sighed together,
 And together wept and sung.
 Proud was Mirren of her mistress
 While her beauty was in bud,
 Yet prouder to remember
 She was come of gentle blood,
 Having Lords to her forefathers,
 With Ladies by their side,
 And loves and wars to tell of,
 And tragic tales to hide.

But the lady, when her beauty
 'Gan to have a faded look,
 Mated with a man beneath her,
 Which her handmaid could not brook.
 Why could she not live single ?
 Maidenhood was clean and sweet ;
 If wed she must, why pick him
 From the gutter on the street ?

She had never served but gentles
 And she trowed she never would,
 So they quarrelled, and they parted,
 Both of them in angry mood.

And the lady had her wedding,
 Though a stranger dressed her hair,
 And a hand she had not proven
 Robed her in her garments fair.
 But the marriage-bed was barren,
 And the wedded life was shame,
 For he wasted all her substance,
 And he soiled a noble name ;
 Till friendless and forsaken,
 With a hot and fevered eye,
 In weariness and sickness
 She prayed that she might die.

But as she sat despairing
 The door was opened wide,
 Then closed again in silence,
 And one stood by her side,
 As of old so trim and tidy,
 As of old with bodice bright,
 With the dainty cap of muslin,
 And the apron clean and white ;
 As of old so peppery tempered,
 As of old so prim and tart ;
 But also underneath it
 Lay the old, true, faithful heart.

And she pushed a bag of something
 Right into the lady's hand,
 Saying, "Not a word, Miss Elsie,
 It is by the Lord's command ;
 I've been toiling, scrimping, saving,
 Till my bones and joints would ache,
 And I've put my soul in peril
 All for filthy lucre's sake.
 Save me now from that temptation,
 Give my soul a chance of life,
 For I've just been self-deceiving,
 Though I have been no man's wife.

"Now get you to the parlour,
 This is not the place for you,
 I am mistress of my kitchen,
 And I have my work to do ;

Take your seat beside the window ;
 There you'll see the breezy bay,
 And the brown sails of the fishers
 Dipping in the white sea-spray,
 And the children pulling seaweed,
 And the old man gathering bait,
 And lads the old boats mending
 That are in a leaky state,
 And the lighthouse on the skerry,
 And the red lamp on the pier,
 And the lass that's always waiting
 For the ship that comes not here.

"Oh, you'll never weary watching
 The ships that come and go,
 Or to hear the sailors singing
 As they turn the capstan slow ;
 Some are bound for far Archangel,
 Some for Greenland's snow and ice,
 Some, it's likely, for a harbour
 In the land of Paradise.
 But the hand of God is o'er them,
 And behind them and before,
 And the gate of Heaven as near
 them
 On the sea as on the shore.

"O my bonnie, sweet Miss Elsie,
 My blessing and my care,
 You'll break my heart now, sitting
 With that look of hard despair ;
 Rouse ye up, there's work to do yet,
 And peace for you to win,
 And the web of life is never
 Only sorrow warped with sin.
 There's sunshine in the rain-cloud,
 And heat in wreaths of snow,
 And God's love is in all things
 That happen here below."

So Mirren pleaded fondly,
 And her plea prevailed at last,
 And they lived together loving,
 As they had done in the past.
 The lady broidered garments,
 Or darned the dainty lace,

Which her handmaid washed as no one
 Could wash in all the place ;
 And if their fare was scanty,
 No eye was there to see,
 As they held themselves aloof still
 In the pride of poverty.

Trim was still the lady's raiment,
 Never seeming to grow worse,
 And she never lacked the glitter
 Of a gold-piece in her purse ;
 And on the Bishop's visit
 She could give him rare old tea—
 For of course she went to Chapel
 Duly with the Quality.
 The Bishop for her lady
 Was the fitting minister ;
 But the Kirk was still to Mirren
 The house of God for her.

So the weeks went by in patience,
 And the Sabbaths brought their peace,
 And the years sped lightly o'er them,
 Though their labours did not cease ;
 And in the summer mornings
 They saw the sun rise red,
 And the sea a golden pavement,
 Whereon his feet might tread ;
 And in the winter evenings
 O'er their needles and their frames
 They told most tragic stories
 Of the old-world knights and dames.

And their way of life was tranquil,
 And their thoughts were pure and
 sweet,
 And the poor that lived beside them
 Thought the better of the street,
 When the gentry came to see them,
 And the great world, in the pride
 Of its carriages and horses,
 Drew the children to its side ;
 Though a grander world was inside
 If they had but eyes to see
 The faith and love that dwelt there,
 And true-hearted piety.

A DARK EVENING

THE night is darkening, and the tide
is leaping

Upon the narrow stretch of lessening
shore,

Soon to engulf it, while the mists
are creeping,

And folding round behind me and
before.

My world is growing small and dim
and lonely,

And its brief day of brightness closing
fast,

I have for comrades ghostly shadows
only,

Whose voices are but echoes from
the past.

They went before me, some in youth-
ful pride,

In manhood some, or noble woman-
hood,

And none may take their places by
my side,

Or make this life, as they did, full
and good.

Much love was given me, far beyond
my merit ;

And its fond service, and its tender
touch,

And words and sweet caressings haunt
my spirit—

O God, that I had only loved as much !

'Tis not the love we get, but that we
give,

Which leaves glad memories for the
coming years,—

Rich after-glows of sunset, and we
live,

And scarce feel any sorrow in our
tears.

I've lived my life ; its task of work
is ended,

And there is little more for me to do ;
Oh that its ill done job might yet be
mended !

That I could make it loving, brave,
and true !

There ! wrap it up—I dare not look
upon it,

The wretched failure ! put it clean
away ;

Nothing can mend it, nothing will
atone it,—

Bury the poor dead product of my day.

FOUND AND LOST¹

I KNEW him the moment he came
Past the screen by the folding door,

Though I could not remember his name,
Or where I had seen him before :

And me, too, he knew at a glance,
For a light kindled up in his eye

When I stept a short step in advance,
And greeted him as he passed by.

Yet it was not a notable face ;—

Just what you may meet any day

At the hunt or the ball or the race,

Or the club or a country-seat ;

Somewhat ruddy, high-featured, and
full,

With well-chiselled nostrils and chin,

Eye blue, like a clear crystal pool,

And the hair on his temples was thin.

A forgetable face in this land,

Where so many are cast in its mould,

Nothing striking about it, or grand,

Only handsome and manly and cold.

¹ I had this incident from M. Lemprière,
to whom it was communicated by one of
the parties concerned in it.

I was over with Soult, and had seen
 "The Duke" and "Sir Peel" and
 the rest,
 At the time when they crowned their
 young Queen,
 Yet this was the face I knew best.

Each feature stood clear in my mind,
 And how in his moods it would look,
 When troubled or fretful or kind,
 Or chastened by pain and rebuke.
 'Twas strange how familiar I seemed
 With the trick of that face and its
 truth:
 Was he some one of whom I had
 dreamed?

Or perhaps an old friend of my youth?

But where had I seen him? and when?
 And his name, too, what could it be?
 I had mixed in the world among men,
 I had travelled by land and by sea;
 Could I hope, in the vanishing throng
 Of memories fast growing dim,
 To pick out this one man, among
 The crowd, and identify him?

You have felt how a name or a word
 At the tip of your tongue shall appear,
 And you know it so well, 'tis absurd
 That you cannot lay hold of it clear;
 So I seemed to be still on the nick
 Of finding out who he could be,
 When lo! by some cozening trick
 He was gone, like that lost word from
 me.

As I gazed after him, too, I caught
 A look 'twas not hard to divine;
 It was plain that the very same thought
 Was brooding in his head as mine.
 For he knit his brows hard as he cast
 A swift, searching glance now and then
 At the face he had known in the
 past—
 But where had he seen it, and when?

Then he whispered to Soult, and I knew
 That my general told him my name;
 But my name did not give him the clue
 That he wished, and he still looked
 the same.

I did as he did, too, and heard
 His name from the man at the door;
 But it was just a strange foreign word,
 And I never had heard it before.

So we stood there apart in the throng,
 A wonder and puzzle to each,
 Nor heeded the harp or the song,
 Or the hiss of their sibilant speech,
 Though he chatted with Soult of the
 wars,

While I waited on, silent of course—
 He was a milord, and had stars,
 And I but a captain of Horse.

But he tired of this puzzling, and soon
 Had put it quite out of his head;
 For I marked him keep time to a tune,
 And laugh when a good thing was said.
 These Islanders are not like us;
 Quite patient of mystery they;
 But a secret that fascinates thus
 We must search, till we clear it away.

I could not, then, rid me of it,
 But brooded in silence apart,
 Nor laughed at their humour and wit,
 Nor praised what they showed of their
 Art.

They thought me a churl, no doubt,
 For my answers were not to the point;
 And I thought they were talking about
 Merest nothings, and all out of joint.

Not once did he cross me again,
 I am sure, for a week and a day;
 But still in the sun and the rain,
 In the season of work and of play,
 He haunted me all day and night,
 And this way and that way I went,
 Ever groping about for the light,
 Like a hound that is seeking the scent.

I searched out my memories all,
Went over the Past like a book,
Page by page, even dared to recall
Things that covered my soul with
rebuke—

Whom I'd gambled with, drank with,
or fought,
Who were rivals in old love affairs,
Who was owing me money, or ought
To be paid what I owed, unawares.

Strange things by that search were
revealed,

Old stories not good to recall,
Things that Fate, too, for ever had
sealed,

Wrongs that could not be righted at all.
Who shall ope all his cupboards, and
find

Nothing there to repent or regret,
No scraps of old writing that blind
With tears the dim eyes that they wet?

Yet 'twas good for me so to review
My former life, scene after scene ;
It gave me some thoughts that were new,
And revived better thoughts that had
been.

It shamed me no less, here and there,
And it set me to putting things right ;
But on this one perplexing affair
It shed not a glimmer of light.

Not a drop of his blood had I shed,
Not a livre was he in my debt,
Not a card with him e'er had I played,
Nor as rivals in love had we met.
I was baffled, and threw myself down
Ont he close-shaven grass of the Park,
And heard the far hum of the town,
And the clear even-song of the lark.

Then all of a sudden, when I
With long, fruitless searching was spent,
Half-minded no longer to try,
Lo ! one unconnected event,

Which, neither before nor behind,
Had linked itself on to my thought,
Broke clear as a star on my mind,
And I knew I had found what I sought.

One moment the curtain concealed
Every hint of the scene and the play ;
Then Phew ! all the stage was revealed
In the blaze of a bright summer day ;
And I knew that I had him at last,
Knew, without any doubt, it was he—
That face, in the far away Past,
That lay so long staring at me.

We had had a brisk skirmish one day
Of outposts, when Soult was in Spain,
And wounded and bleeding I lay,
Thinking ne'er to do battle again ;
And the vultures were soaring up high,
And the lean dogs were creeping about,
And the grey-hooded crow, hopping
nigh,
Kept watch for the life to ebb out.

I lay on the bank of a stream,
A brooklet some yard or two wide,
That whispered to me like a dream
As it slowly lapsed on by my side—
A dream of our beautiful France,
With its white orchard bloom and
its grain,
And the vintages gay in Provence,
I was never to look on again.

And right on the opposite bank
A handsome young English face
Kept gazing at me with a blank,
Vague look from his red resting-place.
“He is plainly dying,” I said,
“But gallant and stout for his years” ;
For close by his side, and stark dead,
Lay one of our brave cuirassiers.

So hour after hour there we lay,
And looked at each other across
The brook that went trickling away,
Slowly licking our blood from the moss ;

Now we heard the loud bugle-calls clear,
Then the noise of the fighting grew
weak,

And the lean dogs came snarling up near,
And the hooded crow whetted his beak.

And all those long hours I perused
His features there, line upon line,
Half-conscious and dim and confused,
As he, too, lay reading at mine ;
I scanned him again and again,
He was the one thing I could see,
And he printed himself on my brain,
Till he seemed like a portion of me.

If I closed my eyes, still he was there
As plain as he had been before ;
If I lifted my eyelids to stare,
He was lying there dabbled in gore.
"He is plainly dying," I thought,
"And better for me he were dead,
Those pain-stricken features will not
Be e'er blotted out of my head."

And never a word could we speak ;
I was lying half-choked with my blood,
Slow-gasping and fainting and weak,
And grasping a handful of mud ;
While he from the opposite brink
Looked across, as if looking his last ;
And oh for some water to drink
From the brook that went rippling past !

Then there fell, as it were, a great mist
On my eyes, and I saw him no more,
Nor thought of him even, nor wist
Was he living or dead, till the door
Of the guest-hall opened, and he
Strode stately into the room,
And that face flashed out upon me,
Like a face from the shades of the tomb.

Now it all came back, and I rushed
To his club to remind him again
Of the day when our life-blood had
gushed,
And mixed in the brooklet in Spain :

But I found he had gone, as they said
Was his way, whither nobody knew,
Perhaps, where the icebergs are bred,
Perhaps, to Japan or Peru.

A traveller, restless and bold,
He would turn now his wandering feet
To seas that were frozen with cold,
Now to plains that were blasted with
heat :

He knew the Red man of the West,
Had rid with the wild Bedaween,
And oft been the African's guest,
Where the spoor of the lion was seen.

Yet would he come back, they averred,
And take his old seat by the fire,
As if nothing meanwhile had occurred
To make foolish people admire.
But I never have seen him again !
And oh to know what it could mean,
That printing of him on my brain
Who was only once more to be seen.

We are tricked by illusory light,
Are we mocked by realities too ?
Is our life but a dream of the night
Whose facts have no purpose in view ?
So strangely my path he had crossed !
So strongly my mind had impressed !
If he must like a shadow be lost,
Why passed he not light as the rest ?

You paint a likeness with care,
Yet smudge it all out the next day,
For you feel that the soul was not there,
And the soul is the man, as you say :
But what if your picture were all
You had hoped e'er to make it, and then
You turned the face back to the wall,
Which was touching the spirits of men ?

Do you grudge them the joy they
have found ?
Do you mean but to mock and to spite ?
Why sow the quick seed in the ground
But to trample it next out of sight ?

God or Nature, that shapes each event,
Does He labour to quicken desire,
Just to disappoint hopes He has sent,
Just to quench His own fresh-kindled
fire?

It is dark to me, dark as the night
That moonless and starless moves on,
With only such glimmer of light,
As to show the clouds brooding thereon.
And I never shall see him again,
Or know what was meant by the look
That was printed so deep on my brain,
As we lay by the slow Spanish brook.

THE LETTRE DE CACHET

In the days when France snapt her
old chains,
And rose up, and swore,
"We are men, we have hearts, we
have brains,
We will slaves be no more
To king or to noble or priest,
But all men shall be
As brothers from bondage released,
All equal and free":
And some stood in wonder amazed,
Their wits of no use;
And some said the people were crazed,
And Bedlam broke loose;
And some, in pure terror aghast,
In troops ran away;
But some held it safer to cast
Them into the fray;
While others took snuff with a smile,
As they tramped through the mud,
Saying, "Time we should teach this
Canaille
By the letting of blood."
Well, the people were mad, if you will,
In those days of hot rage,
Yet the shout of their multitudes still
Was the pulse of the age,

And the hope of the nations around,
Who waited on, dumb,
Thinking, "We too are fettered and
bound:

Let us see what will come."
But their kings and their nobles and
priests

Gnashed their teeth when they saw,
And screamed at their altars and feasts,
"Ho! for God and the law!

Did He not make us lords of the world,
And these for our slaves?

Let our armies be mustered, and hurled
On their heads like sea-waves."

In those days, then, when bold spirits
ran

From prison to prison,
They came on a squalid old man,
Half-reft of his reason,
Who had been shut up for long years
In a stone-vaulted cell
Wet-walled with his sweat and his
tears—

Why, no one could tell.
No record there was of his crime,
If crime he had done;
No trial had he at the time
When they shut out the sun
From his life; and alone there he lay,
And heard not a sound,
Save the grating of bolts once a day
In the silence profound,
Or the fall of a drop on the floor
From the roof overhead,
Though the streets might be all in
a roar

To have wakened the dead;
And he dreamed, as he lay on his straw,
Of the sun and the lark,
And day followed day, and he saw
But the dusk and the dark;
For at noon it was gloaming down there,
And at evening, as death;
And still in the close, foetid air
He was gasping for breath.—

So our shepherds took care that their
 flocks
 Should not stray from the fold,
 If stone walls and strong bars and locks
 Might be trusted to hold.
 But the bands of that mighty revolt
 Flung open his door,
 And cried, as they shattered the bolt,
 "Thou art free, as of yore
 When, a schoolboy, thy wont was
 to stray
 By the wood and the brook,
 And the trout in the ripple would play
 With the gay-feathered hook ;
 Or when, as a man thou would'st go
 To the tryst in the glen,
 And love whispered, tender and low,
 What is dearest to men.
 Come forth from thy wet-walled cell,
 Where the damp and the mould
 And the dusk and the dark ever dwell
 With the cramp and the cold ;
 Be merry, the land now is free,
 And thy gaoler, the king,
 Is where all wicked kings ought to be—
 Go dance, then, and sing."
 They were rough, coarse fellows ;
 and yet
 They were touched to the quick
 By the pale, bloodless spectre that met
 Their gaze, and the sick
 Wan flicker of light in his eye,
 Which had not any hope,
 Nor a longing to live or to die,—
 Content just to mope,
 Without converse of things unseen,
 To sweeten his pain,
 Or remembrance of things that had
 been,
 To restore hope again.

So dazed, and uncertain, he crept
 From his cell and his straw,
 And they marked that he trembled
 and wept,
 When the sunlight he saw ;

And blinked, bewildered and blind,
 Like an owl or a bat,
 Feeling out with his lean hands to find
 What he wished to be at ;
 For he had not seen daylight for years,
 Only dim, pallid gleams
 Through stanchions and cobwebs and
 tears,
 Or at night in his dreams.
 And it was not a joy, but a pain
 To look on the light,
 Or to see human faces again,
 Or to stand straight upright.
 So, dazed and amazed, forth he went
 Through the iron-nailed gate,
 All tremulous, shrinking, and bent,—
 A man out of date.

He passed through the iron-nailed door,
 For they said he was free
 To do as he had done of yore,
 When the hill and the sea
 And the wood and the heath and
 the stream
 Knew his coming so well—
 Unless it was only a dream
 He had dreamt in his cell.
 Was he not once a lord, and had lands,
 And a chateau somewhere,
 And serfs who obeyed his commands,
 And a wife passing fair—
 Too fair—or was all that again
 A dream and no more ?
 There were so many passed through
 his brain
 As he lay on the floor
 'Mong the straw, and had nothing to do.
 Yea, a dream it had been,
 For a king must be loyal and true
 To his peers and his queen.
 Then he smote his thin palm on
 his brow,
 As if striving to see
 What would never come clear to
 him now—
 Best never to be !

Just a glimmer of light broke on him,
With a spasm of pain,
Then the grey look, sodden and dim,
Settled on him again.

Oh the horror and terror of that
Aimless walk up the street !
Was he sleeping or waking ? and what
At next turn should he meet ?
Now his ear was jarred with the
strain

Of the wild Marseillaise ;
Then his heart was smit with the pain
Of some wolf-hungry gaze.

And why were the workmen abroad
In the hours of their toil ?

And where were the good priests
of God

With the pyx and the oil ?

And where was his light-hearted
France,

And its wit-loving soul ?

And who were those dames in
the dance

Of the mad Carmagnole ?

And oh the fell rush and the tramp

Of the hurrying throng !

And the sights here and there by
the lamp,

As they bore him along,

Where they'd hoisted a noble, per-
haps,—

As the nobles of yore

Nailed the vermin they caught in
their traps

To the big barn door,—

With maybe a priest by his side

In his old black soutane—

They were fain to have priests, when
they died,

So they coupled the twain.

And then, as he shuddered and stared,
The tumbril drove past

With the victims that law had
ensnared—

Some pale and aghast,

Some gay as to wedding they rode,
Some mocking with scorn
The crowd, that was raging for blood
Of the high and well-born.

There were matrons and maidens fair,
Who bent their heads low ;

No powder they need for their hair,
It is white now as snow.

There were old men and boys doomed
to die ;

What could it all mean ?

And lo ! in the distance rose high
The black guillotine.

As they hurried him onward, at first
He would shout like the rest,

As if some fell demon accursed

Had got into his breast.

But at length on the skirt of the
crowd

The madness was quelled,

And his soul within him was bowed

At the sights he beheld.

Could that be the pulse and the throb

Of a great-thoughted age—

That hoarse, fierce yell of a mob

In its masterless rage ?

How they jostled and struggled and
plashed

Through the mire and the mud.

The frantic Unbreeched and Unwashed,
In their craving for blood !

Once more for a moment his brain

Had clearness and power,

And the soul of his youth came again

In that terrible hour.

He had fain closed his eyes at the sight

He was looking on there ;

But so strong was the spell in its might

That he could not but stare,

While he sickened to gaze on that hell

Of the fiend and the brute,

Which was holding him fast in its
spell,

Tongue-tied there and mute

And where were the nobles of France,
 And the knight and the squire?
 And where were the sword and
 the lance,
 And the cord and the fire?
 And where was the king and the throne,
 And the order of state?
 And where all the world he had
 known,
 And forgotten of late?
 Flashed a light in his eye, and a
 frown
 On his forehead was plain;
 Then the dull grey look settled down
 Apathetic again.

Next day he came back to his gaol,
 Looking weary and sore,
 And prayed with a pitiful wail
 They would open its door.
 No, he had not committed a crime;
 He had just lost his head,
 And he did not belong to the time,
 And his friends were all dead.
 Would they not let him back to
 his cell,
 And its straw and its peace?
 And there for the rest he would dwell,
 Till death brought release.
 "For it pains me, the glare of the
 light,
 And they fill me with fear,
 The horrors that meet me by night,
 And the sounds that I hear.
 Still the tocsin is ringing and ringing,
 And women are seen
 That song of the Marseillaise singing
 Round the black guillotine;
 And princes and nobles are killed
 By the axe and the cord,
 And orgies of darkness are held
 In the courts of the Lord;
 And there is not a priest to confess,
 Nor a monk begging alms,
 Nor a pyx for a soul in distress,
 Nor a nun singing psalms.

And all in confusion is whirled,
 And strangeness and fear;
 And I have but one friend in the world,
 And lo! he is here."
 So they let him go back to his cell,
 And the straw and the mat.
 And his friend, who could he be?
 Ah! well;
 The friend was a rat.

Do you mock at my story because
 Thus lamely it ends,
 But the man in a prison-cell has
 Small choice of his friends:
 Just turns from the hard stones to aught
 That has life in it—now
 To a seedling flower, chance blown,
 and taught
 In his window to grow;
 And now to a spider whose web
 Was devouring his light,
 For life clings to life in the ebb
 And dead hour of its night;
 And there is a pathos where such
 Fond clinging appears,
 A something human to touch
 The deep fount of tears.
 So, I deem that his instinct was true
 When he turned back to that
 Which was the one friend that he knew,
 Were it only a rat.
 It was something that trusted in him,
 Something to love,
 And it shed on his darkness a dim
 Feeble light from above.

A CALM

YESTERDAY the wind blew high,
 Tore the Minch in tatters small,
 Drove us back to dripping Skye
 Wrapped up in a black cloud-pall:
 And we saw upon the strand,
 Broken boat and shattered oar,
 Women wailing on the land,
 Terror stalking on the shore.

Then the fickle waters, spent,
 Stretched them out and lay supine—
 Samson resting now, content
 To have wrecked the Philistine.

Rocking now in summer calm,
 Making not an inch of way,
 While the air is soft as balm,
 And the hills in loch and bay
 Wrap them in a purple haze
 Whereon the lingering sun doth lean,
 And the clouds are all ablaze,
 And the waters catch their sheen,
 Every rag of canvas spread,
 With flapping sail and creaking boom,
 Pennon at the tall mast-head
 Drooping like a draggled plume,
 We have rolled here to and fro
 All the long, hot August day,
 Till the westering sun is low,
 Making not an inch of way.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
 Keen-eyed screaming seagulls come,
 Touch the sea with light wing-tip,
 And skim away the floating crumb:
 Guillemots are calling low
 To their chicks that wander far,
 And rising, flap their wings to show
 The two bold swimmers where they
 are ;

Hungry cormorants hurry by,
 Snorts the porpoise here and there,
 And not a ripple can we spy
 Stirring to the moving air.
 Blue the cloudless sky o'erhead,
 Blue the waveless sea below,
 Only the tide, low-pulsing, made
 A lazy rocking to and fro.

So basking in the purple light,
 One said, "Lo! this is heaven,
 indeed ;
 Yesterday we had the fight,
 Now we get the rest we need.

Happy creatures round us be,
 Joy is in our hearts and love,
 Peace is on the earth and sea,
 Glory in the heaven above."

Gruffly then our skipper : "Stuff!
 This may be a heaven to you ;
 As for me I've had enough
 Of those oily waters blue.
 Here have we been all the day
 Listening to that creaking spar,
 While the seagulls fly away,
 And the dab-chicks wander far.
 Let me have a good stiff breeze,
 Hear a rushing at the prow,
 Now and then be shipping seas,
 Lurching in the hollow now :
 Anything—a wind ahead,
 Racking cloud and driving rain—
 Sooner than these waters dead,
 And watching for a breeze in vain.
 Heaven ! there's only one thing worse
 Than to lie here like a log ;
 That is not to know your course,
 Sounding in a dismal fog.
 Vain to keep the helm aport,
 Vain to spread the topsail high ;
 Better like a porpoise snort,
 Better be a gull and fly,
 Better to have flat, webbed feet,
 Bad to walk, but good to swim,
 Than be drifting in the heat,
 Till the gloaming light is dim.

He who made the worlds, they say,
 When His busy work was done,
 Rested on the Sabbath day,
 Till its listless hours were run.
 I've been in the East, and know
 That is still the bliss they crave,
 Just to lie, and let the slow
 Hours go dreaming to the grave.
 Well ; if that was all the heaven
 The devil had to be happy in,
 I do not wonder much that even
 By way of change he took to sin.—

There's that creaking boom again !
 How the lazy shadows float !
 'Tis enough to turn one's brain
 To hear that croaking guillemot !

SPRING MORNING

In the spring when the cuckoo calls
 From the shade of the fresh green
 leaves,
 And the young lambs leap on the grass,
 And the swallows are brisk on the
 eaves,
 And things with glittering wings
 Bask in the sunshine it brings ;

In the morning when glad birds sing,
 And flowers on their dewdrops close,
 And the meadow is breathing its sweets
 Where the bee-loved clover grows,
 And the gleams and the ripple of
 streams
 Are like joys that come to us in dreams ;

Oh the sweet, bright mornings of spring,
 With the dew and the song and the
 flower,
 And the glad young life of the world,
 As it laughs in the glory of power,
 It is good for the spirit as food,
 The tender green leaf of the wood.

Ah ! well that the heart, growing cold
 With the frosts of the wintry years,
 Can still be made glad as of old,
 When the spring in its beauty appears,
 And the light, coming forth in its
 night,
 Drives away the sad ghosts of the
 night.

ORWELL

I STAND on the shore of the lake,
 Where the small wave ripples and frets ;
 Oh the land has its weeds, and the lake
 has its reeds,
 And the heart has its vain regrets.

Hark ! how the skylarks sing,
 Far up about God's own feet,
 And the click of the loom is in each
 little room,
 Of the long, bare village street.

Yonder the old home stands,
 With the little grey kirk behind ;
 There are children at play on the
 sunny brae,
 And their shouts come down the wind,

With the smell of the old sweet flowers
 We planted there long ago ;
 And the red moss-rose still buds
 and blows
 By the door, where it used to grow.

All of it still unchanged,
 Yet all so changed to me ;
 For love then was sweet, and its bliss
 complete,
 And there was no cloud to see.

But the light is quenched and gone
 That brightened the place of yore,
 And all the suns and the shining ones
 Shall bring back that light nevermore.

Ah me ! for the shore and the lake
 Where the small wave ripples and frets !
 The land has its weeds, and the lake
 has its reeds,
 And the heart has its vain regrets.

BALLADS FROM SCOTTISH HISTORY

INTRODUCTORY

WHAT have our men of old times
To say for themselves,
Now their loves, hates, quarrels, and
crimes

Have been laid on the shelves,
And buried in cobwebs and dust,
Or eaten by mildew and rust?

Strong men; their passions were strong;
And so was their faith,
Strong to stand up against wrong,

And resist to the death:
But fell were some of their deeds
In the warfare of clans and of creeds.

Oh, theirs was the wrestle for good
In the quick womb of Time,
Which they only in part understood,
But with courage sublime
They struggled on towards the light
With their hearts still set on the right.

Maybe; yet our Jacob was not
Without mean crafty ways;
And our Esau had glimpses of thought
Not unworthy of praise;
Not saints all who chose the right path,
Nor the others all children of wrath.

We shall err from the truth if we keep
Just to old Party lines,
And stir up old hatreds that sleep
In the books of Divines,
And rulings of Lawyers, and tales
That haunt the dim hills and the dales.

And there is not a quarrel so bad
But that we may see
Some point in it we should be glad
Had it got mastery—
Some right amid wrong, to explain
How true hearts by it might remain.

For I think scarce a man can be hot
With a fervent goodwill,
And cast in his life and his lot
With a cause wholly ill;
It must have some savour of good
To rouse the self-sacrifice mood.

Ah, well; there were schemers of
course,

Heeding not wrong nor right,
And captains of foot and of horse
Loving only the fight,
And waiters-on watching the tide
To find out the safe, winning side.

Camp-followers these in the war,
Eager only for gain,
Like the vultures that come from afar
To feast on the slain—
Or gamblers who played their big game,
And were cast forth at length in their
shame.

But the great groaning multitude, dumb,
Had at least a true thought,
And looked for God's kingdom to come,
And brighten the lot
Of the needy and poor and oppressed,
And crown their long struggle with rest.

And so, through the ages, the throng
 Of mixed good and ill
 Confusedly wrestled along,
 To work out His will,
 Who aims not to finish the strife,
 But to open new doors into life.

“IT CAME WITH A LASS,
 AND WILL GANG WITH
 A LASS”

Fy! fy! Oliver fled!
 Yet he had ten thousand men!
 All captured now, wounded, or dead,
 And the foe had not one for his ten!
 They were gathered from hill and from
 glen
 To the muster on Solway shore,
 And there's grief now on many a Ben,
 But the shame of it touches me more.

My heart within me is bowed
 By the news of this sorrowful day;
 Let the women make ready my shroud,
 It is time I were hasting away.
 I have often been merry and gay
 With a lass and a glass and a stave,
 For I cared but for pleasure and play,
 And now they have dug me a grave.

That dower of Marjorie Bruce—
 A crown with no head it would fit—
 On our brows it has ever sat loose,
 And brought only trouble with it.
 Yet we lacked not courage or wit,
 And we loved the old land and its fame,
 But we heeded not snaffle or bit,
 When a woman would rule in the game.

The gossips now tell me I've got
 A fine lass-bairn to embrace;
 Heaven help her! a sorrowful lot
 She will have, I fear me, to face.
 For let her have beauty and grace,
 And a mind that is noble and great,
 She comes of a tragical race,
 And she will have a tragical fate.

For my Barons are selfish and proud,
 Taken up with old family feuds;
 And the Prelates are clamouring loud
 For the heretics' lives and their goods;
 And the monks glare out of their hoods
 At the progress of freedom and light;
 And the peasantry sullenly broods
 On their wrongs, and to have them set
 right.

The end of the old world is near,
 And alas! in the shock of the change,
 How much will go down that is dear!
 How much there will be to avenge!
 Ah, God's work is fearful and strange;
 Crown and sceptre and temple and
 tower,
 And all that man's wit may arrange
 Goes down when He stirs in His power.

But get ready the christening feast,
 Let the gossips bring candle and cup,
 And the child have a good time at least,
 Ere the depths in their terror break up.
 I will put on the crown when I sup,
 Though I wear it in shame and in pain,
 It came with a lass on the crup,
 With a lass it will leave us again.

And send for the man on the Dryfe,
 That Oliver also may feast.
 Why not? since he still has his life,
 'Tis but honour and valour have ceased,
 And he'll readily find him a priest
 Who will heal for a groat his smart,
 As 'tis only the poor he has fleeced,
 And broken his old king's heart.

It is not the slow touch of Time
 That has sprinkled my hair so with grey,
 For I'm all but a man in my prime,
 But the spring of my life is away.
 I have come to the end of my day,
 And seen its last lights where they fall
 On the clouds, and have only to pray,
 As I turn a grey face to the wall.

GEORGE WISHART

THEY lured him away from my side,
 The man likest Christ I have known :
 I felt in my heart that they lied,
 And vowed he should not go alone.
 But he waved me aside, saying, "One
 Is enough for a sacrifice ;
 Your work here is only begun,
 Wait you till God's time for the price."

Oh, lightly the Cardinal laughed,
 Having snared his meek victim at
 length,
 And gaily the French wines were
 quaffed
 That night in his castle of strength ;
 And he sent forth a message straight-
 way
 To his brother High-priest in the West,
 To share in devouring the prey,
 Which would give to their Babylon rest.

The Glasgow Archbishop was vain,
 And the Cardinal haughty and proud ;
 They had quarrelled, too, once and
 again,
 Whose cross should go first through
 the crowd,
 And had fought at the altar for place
 With surplices tattered and torn,
 And crowns had been cracked, by the
 mace,
 Of clerics all shaven and shorn.

But Pilate and Herod agreed
 When they plotted to crucify Christ,
 And these, too, were one in their deed,
 When Wishart was sacrificed.
 Together, with feigning and lies,
 The saint to the faggots they doomed,
 Together they feasted their eyes
 On the flames which the martyr
 consumed.

And so my loved Master and Friend—
 Meek and brave he, a seer was known—
 They brought to a sorrowful end,
 Yet he died like a king on his throne.
 And I rede you, Lord Cardinal, soon
 The day of God's vengeance shall
 come,
 When the pride that soared high as
 the moon
 Shall lie in the dust, and be dumb.

I know not the day nor the hour,
 Nor yet by whose hand 'twill be
 wrought,
 But I know that God reigneth in
 power,
 And that right shall be done, as it
 ought.
 I have faith though His judgments be
 strange,
 And at times darkly hid from our sight,
 That at length, His own saints to
 avenge,
 They will break forth as clear as the
 light.

For the spirit that now is abroad
 'Mong the nations of Europe is here,
 And will cast off the horrible load
 Of priestly oppression and fear :
 Our land too has come to the birth
 And the pains of her travail begin,
 But I trow she has strength to bring
 forth
 The life that is stirring within.

We have only a young lass to rule
 Our rude and turbulent folk,
 Who was trained in a pestilent school,
 And comes of a light-minded stock.
 She knows not the land of her sires,
 And she loves the gay doings of
 France—
 Its trinkets and changeful attires,
 And the viol, the pipe, and the dance.

Well, it's only like youth to be gay,
 And her mirth we might haply forgive,
 Though I fear me it is not the way
 To prepare for the life she must live ;
 But they've poisoned her mind against
 truth,

To quench the faint spark of our hope,
 And the mass-priests have thirled her
 youth
 To the service of Rome and the Pope.

Small wonder God's people are filled
 With fears and anxieties, then,
 When they see all our rulers unskilled
 In the wise arts of governing men,
 All selfishly seeking their own,
 Ambitious of power and of place,
 And fain, for a bribe, to disown
 The Word of the Lord and His grace ;

While the Baal-priests stand at the gate
 Of the High Kirks, and group in
 the porch,

And mutter their malice and hate,
 And threaten the faggot and torch ;
 And treason and murder and strife
 Are hatched by the Cardinal still,
 As he broods every day of his life
 How to bend the whole land to his will.

Yet dark as the hour now may be,
 And long as the night still may last,
 By the Truth we shall yet be made free,
 And the Truth spreadeth surely and fast.
 God will not forsake us, or fail
 When we pass through the fire and
 the flood ;
 Yea, He will be our buckler and mail
 When the sword shall be thirsting
 for blood.

There are evil times coming, I know,
 Confusion and terror and wrath,
 And the strong man shall then be
 laid low,
 And the weak shall be turned from
 the path ;

But beyond, I can see a great light,
 And the land resting peaceful and calm
 'Neath the rule of high wisdom
 and right,
 With the Kirk praising God in a psalm.

I have faith in the Word and the Rock,
 Our refuge in trouble and care ;
 For the one thing forbidden Christ's
 flock

Is to wring the weak hands of despair.
 A Chief, in the battle's hot brunt,
 May fall in the pride of his strength,
 But another shall step to the front,
 And march on to triumph at length.

And a land, to be famous in story
 For piety, letters, and truth,
 Shall arise in her splendour and glory
 Ever fresh in the dews of her youth ;
 For poverty she shall have wealth,
 And honours in room of her shame,
 Her plagues shall give place unto health,
 And the world shall yet ring with
 her fame.

THE RETURN OF THE QUEEN

Saw ye the Queen,
 Our Queen without peer,
 With the wind blowing keen,
 And a fog creeping near,
 As she came from the land
 Of the sun and the vine

To our mist-shrouded strand,
 Where the heather and pine
 Blend their breath with the smell of
 the salt sea-brine ?

She passed me close by
 As she stepped from the ship,
 With a tear in her eye,
 And a smile on her lip :—

The smile from a glance
 At the crowd on the shore,
 But the tear was for France
 She might see never more,
 And for friends of her youth, and the
 blithe days of yore.

Her nobles stood round,
 Each with sword by his side,
 Every man of them bound
 At her bidding to ride,
 And they kissed her fair hand,
 And they bent low the knee,
 As gallant a band
 As you'll anywhere see,
 Grave old Lords of State, and youths
 courtly and free.

Lord and Lady had come,
 Merchant, peasant, and clerk,
 To welcome her home,
 And her bearing to mark ;
 Some raised a great shout,
 Some sang a glad song,
 Some wandered about,
 Shaking hands with the throng,
 And wept as they prayed that her days
 might be long.

She is fair as a rose
 Full-blossomed in June,
 And her step as she goes
 Has the swing of a tune,
 There's a glint in her eye
 Hints of good-humoured mirth,
 And she holds her head high
 As befits her high birth,
 Sole heir of a line that held long sway
 on earth.

There is pride in her port,
 Though so sprightly and young,
 And the ready retort
 Will not fail on her tongue,
 She is learned and fit
 To make laws for our crimes,

Yet may show more of wit
 Than discretion at times,
 But her heart it is sweet as the bloom
 on the limes.

She knows her own mind,
 And will have her own way,
 Which, if passion should blind,
 May bring trouble some day ;
 And I thought I could trace
 The dark shade of a cloud
 Passing over her face,
 When the ministers bowed,
 And read out their well - pondered
 greetings aloud.

Every head was laid bare,
 Every heart loudly beat,
 Many kneeling down there,
 Kissed the ground at her feet,
 Had she trod on their ranks,
 As she passed, there had been
 But a murmur of thanks
 For the honour, I ween,
 And a God bless thee, Lady, God
 save the Queen.

France's lilies are fine,
 Scotland's thistle is rough,
 Yet her crown it can line
 With a down soft enough.
 Truth is better than wit,
 Love is better than gold,
 And in these, as is fit,
 We our Queen will enfold—
 Ah ! we wist not that day what the
 Future did hold !

THE GORDONS AND CORRIE

THE Queen has ridden North :
 Lord James is at her side,
 And Knight and Lord, with one accord,
 Should with her banner ride ;

Yet scant three hundred men
Have answered to her call
In fighting gear, with sword and spear,
Or arquebuse and ball.

'Twas known that robber bands
Beyond the Grampians stood,
Who raided cattle, and did stark
battle,

And shed the lieges' blood ;
And if the truth be told
They laughed at Queen and Crown,
And had no awe for Kirk or Law,
Stronghold or Borough's town.

There was not room in the North
For Huntly and also the Queen ;
The Gordons gay had all the sway,
The Sheriff was never seen ;
With shaveling Priests to sain
The clansmen when they fell,
They robbed and killed even as they
willed,
And feared nor death nor hell.

She might not leave her folk
To be so sore oppressed,
Nor yet would she let Huntly be
Too utterly distressed ;
Therefore she ordered so
That a small array came forth :
Not one in ten of her noblemen
Went with her to the North.

When Huntly heard the bruit
About the Queen's array,
He sent to call his kinsmen all
To Bog-an-gight straightway,
While they might meet secure,
And hunt a stag and dine,
And counsel hold with the wise and
old,
And drink a flask of wine.

Then trooped to Bog-an-gight
The Gordons near and far,

From Dee and Spey they took their
way,
From Buchan and Braemar.
Glentamar lads arose,
Strathbogie was not slow,
And Enzie's carles gave up their
quarrels
And girt their swords to go.

Aboyne from a sick bed rose,—
He was aye of a ready mind,—
And Haddo sware no Gordon there
Should leave him far behind ;
Ellon and Udney came,
And grim old Rothiemay,
And Gordon o' Gight, ere morning
light,
Was up, and horsed and away.

Bonnie and broad their lands
By Livet and Ythan and Dee,
Where Deveron flows, and Lossie goes
Past Elgin to the sea ;
The Bogie drove their mills,
The Gadie cooled their heat,
In Spean and Spey the Gordons gay
Did wash their horses' feet.

And now from Peel and Grange,
From Clachan and Castle strong,
O'er moor and moss, past cairn and cross,
They merrily march along.
Loose in its scabbard each
His sword held ready to draw ;
Their hearts were light, and their
weapons bright,
And they laughed at Queen and Law.

The Earl was old and fat,
And therefore might not brook
Graith of steel on head or heel,
Or brazen clasp, or hook ;
But wily and cunning plots
Came ready to his brain,
For more by wit than by weapons fit
His ends he strove to gain.

Now, when the feast was ended
 And all had drunk their fill,
 The Chiefs still sat, consulting what
 Might bode them good or ill;
 What meant the base-born Prior,
 What Lethington wished to get,
 What Grange would do if the trumpet
 blew
 A note of battle yet.

And some said this, and some said
 that,
 And hot debate arose,
 And young heads got with the good
 wine hot,
 And well-nigh came to blows.
 Then the Earl held up a brimming
 cup,
 Saying, "Pledge we all our Queen,
 The fairest face, and the rarest grace,
 That ever the land hath seen.

"She comes not here for judgment,
 Nor comes she here to fight,
 But trusts in you whose hearts are true,
 That you'll maintain her right;
 Lord Gordon has been wooing,
 And I think that he has won
 Her love and faith that until death
 Shall bind them into one.

"As for her bastard brother
 Who thinks our lands to gain—
 Moray and Mar both, mine they are,
 And mine they shall remain.
 Cleverly she has fooled them
 Here where our strength doth lie,
 And six to one we shall set on,
 And smite them hip and thigh."

Up sprang Adam o' Gordon,
 A cockerel brisk was he,
 With a lusty shout his voice rang
 out,
 And his sword he brandished free;

And up the rest leaped with him,
 Clashing their blades with might
 And drank a noggin, and cried the
 slogan,
 Keen for the coming fight.

I know not if the Gordon
 Spake sooth about the Queen,
 For Huntly's Earl a crafty carle
 From youth to age had been.
 And royal hearts are deep,
 And who may search their thoughts?
 And her way of life amid storm
 and strife
 Some cunning may well have taught.

They reckoned that the muster
 Of the Gordon clan would daunt
 The little band from the Fife lowland,
 Which was all the Queen could vaunt.
 But though her force was scanty
 When she rode off to the North,
 She well might boast of her gallant host,
 For they all were men of worth.

Lord James could play the man,
 Though he liked to rule the State,
 Kirkaldy stood a soldier good,
 And few with him could mate;
 And Maitland, deep in thought,
 could keep
 A cool head in the fray;
 They had learned in France to wield
 the lance,
 And to order the battle array.

To Corrichie marched the Gordons,
 All ready for the fight,
 With cords and bands to bind the hands
 Of captive Lord and Knight—
 Two thousand plaided men
 With dirk and sharp claymore,
 They were ill trained, but they had
 stained
 The heather full oft with gore,

They came on with a rush
And a barbarous slogan cry,
And taunting words, and brandished
swords,

And the pibroch sounding high ;
The odds indeed were great.
But their foes were better drilled,
And theirs too was the better cause,
And their leaders better skilled.

Half-way across the field,
When the race had tried their wind,
They had to cross a black flow moss
Where their ranks were swiftly thinned.
The volleys from the muskets
They answered still with cheers,
But they faltered plain when they
reached the main
Battle of bristling spears.

Lord Huntly was a Chief
But hardly a fighting man ;
It might not be fear, but from the rear
He ordered still his clan,
Though he saw Lord James in front,
And Grange lead on his men,
And their serried rank from the
solid bank
Hurl back his force again.

Right soon the play was played,
And shouts were changed to shrieks ;
'Twas scarce begun ere it was done,
Though it had been planned for weeks.
Brief was the time of battle,
The Coronach needed more.
But it will be years ere the woman's
tears,
Are dry as they were before.

Some said Earl Huntly fell—
For he was an unwieldy man,
And scant o' breath—and was done
to death
In the back rush of his clan.

Some held that he died of shame
That his House was brought so low ;
This only I say that dead he lay
With never a wound to show.

So the Gordon's might was broken,
And it did not fall alone,
For never again was a great House
fain

To wrestle a fall with the throne,
As Somerled and Bell-the-Cat
Had done in days of old,
For the power o' th' Law now held
in awe
Both chief and baron bold.

LADY SEATON'S COMPLAINT

ALONE here, and in anguish
As motherhood draws nigh,
I pine and faint and languish
While the hours drag slowly by ;
Yet, My Lord, I'll not upbraid him
That he is not here ;
Mary, Mother, aid him,
Holy saints be near.

He is not gone a-stalking
The red deer on the hill,
Nor yet with falcon hawking
By marsh or moor or rill,
Else I might upbraid him
That he is not here ;
But Mary, Mother, aid him,
Holy saints be near.

He is not with gay young nobles
A-playing at the ball,
Nor is he throwing doubles
Where dice uncertain fall,
Else I would upbraid him
That he is not here ;
But Mary, Mother, aid him,
Holy saints be near.

When the Council ponders,
 He comes with words of light ;
 Or when the battle thunders,
 He strikes for truth and right ;
 So I may not upbraid him
 That he is not here ;
 Mary, Mother, aid him,
 Holy saints be near.

When his Queen is needing
 Loyal hearts and true ;
 When the Church lies bleeding,
 And calls for succour due,
 There his faith has led him,
 Though his heart is here ;
 Mary, Mother, aid him,
 Holy saints be near

Yet my heart is longing
 For his fond caress,
 Fears and fancies thronging
 On my loneliness ;
 I will not upbraid him
 In my hour of pain,
 But Mary, Mother, aid him,
 And bring him soon again.

IN EDINBURGH CASTLE

WHERE the wall its shadow cast
 As the sun went redly down,
 To and fro Grange and Lethington
 passed,
 While the light upon Arthur Seat
 faded fast,
 And on grey St. Giles's crown.

The siege drew nigh its close,
 For hemmed in on every side,
 Each new morning of late they rose
 To a famine of bread, and a feast of blows,
 And many had pined and died.

Grange was a soldier brave,
 Maitland was crafty and keen ;

They had tried by their wits to guide
 the wave,
 And to ride the tide when the storm
 did rave,
 And bring back the captive Queen.

Said Maitland, "The end draws near,
 And they'll strike, and will not spare ;
 When we render the place, if they
 find us here
 They will hang us over the battle-
 ments clear
 For the corbies to pick us bare.

But I mean not to give them the
 chance :
 Life is sweet, yet I fear not death
 If it comes in due course, as the years
 advance,
 Or by stroke of a sword, or thrust of
 a lance,
 Or a bullet that stops your breath.

But the men of the long black robe
 Have a method from which I shrink—
 A running noose, and a howling mob,
 And a fumbling hangman who bungles
 his job,
 And I'd rather the old Roman drink.

To-morrow the game will be up,
 On the whole we have not played
 it ill ;
 But we've lost. And what say you
 with me to sup
 This evening, and share in a farewell
 cup
 That will settle our share of the bill ?

The food will be scant, for I think
 Our rations have come to a close ;
 But we shall not complain of the wine
 that we drink,
 For we still have a flask that will
 bubble and wink,
 And mock at our well-baffled foes.

You will not? you don't mind the
rope?

Or is it religion restrains?

And have we got rid of the old-
fashioned Pope,

But to cling all the more to the fear
and the hope

Which were the mainspring of his
gains.

Ah well! By and by I shall know
More than Priest or Presbyter can,
Of the place up above, or the place
down below,

And I'll take all the risk of it rather
than show

That I cannot face death like a man.

Knox prays for you every night,
But has never a good word for me;
I am doomed, as it seems, to go down
to the pit

As the one place for which I am
thoroughly fit,

And where I must evermore be.

Yet I fancy that John, might have
dropt

A word for me, just by the way.

He must know that when some of you
foolishly hoped

To blind him, or bribe him, 'twas I
alone stopped

All efforts at that kind of play.

'Twas insulting him even to think

Of winning him o'er to our side,
Or getting him even for a moment
to wink,

When he had, as he always had, some
certain blink

Of the thing we were striving to hide.

He was just the one man in the land
We could neither corrupt nor appal,

Who clearly saw through all the plots
that we planned;

And with hardly a trump card once in
his hand,

He has won the great game from us all.

I grant him a head always clear,

And a will that no terrors could bend,
A heart that felt never a shrinking
of fear,

And would not be moved by a smile
or a tear

Of his Queen, or his lovingest friend.

And it was not his own ends he sought,
I allow him honest and true—

A dreamer of course, and a danger,
but not

To mend his own fortune, or better
his lot,

As we mostly were minded to do.

He is not the manner of man

To be tricked or terrified—no!

But had you adopted the one certain
plan

Wise rulers have used since the world
began,

He would have been dead long ago,

And we should have ruled in his stead,
And brought back the Queen to her

throne,

And seen on the Tolbooth the grin
of his head

Where it stuck on the spike, as I
hear that he said

He hoped yet to look on my own.

But you scrupled to ransom the State
By the life he was ready to give,

Though your fine gospel rests, and
its glory is great,

On the fact that a man bowed his
head unto Fate

That the perishing people might live.

So the Queen has been driven from
her throne,
And the Kirk has been robbed of its
lands,
And Mitres, Madonnas, and Masses
are gone,
And Knox, o’er the ruin exalted alone,
Plays Pope, and our nobles commands.

But I’ll none of his orders, nor yet
The gallows he means for my throat,
So long as I know how to pay the
old debt
With a fair cup of wine after supper,
and get
To the end of all uncertain thought.

That supper did never take place,
For the Castle was rendered that day,
And the rebels obtained neither favour
nor grace,
But were haled to the prison, and
looked in the face
Of a great howling mob all the way.

Only Maitland one morning was found,
With a flask near his white finger-tips,
Lying low in his cell on the rush-
covered ground,
With a sweet sickly smell hanging
heavily round,
And a cynical smile on his lips.

“THERE’S A HOLE IN THIS PARLIAMENT”

(JAMES VI.)

ILL fares the land when favourites rule
A king that makes pretence to reign,
And power is given to knave or fool
Who nothing heed but lust of gain.
There is no order in the State,
No safety in the common street
For brawls and feuds among the great,
That rage wherever they chance
to meet.

Perhaps a Maxwell bites his nail,
And straight a Johnstone’s sword is out;
Perhaps an angry Scott may rail,
And Carrs their slogan then will shout.
Let Douglas keep the Causeway crown,
And Hamiltons will storm the while;
And half the Clans will throng the town
To mock the pride of great Argyll.

The Grants and Gordons are not slack
To dirk each other, when they can;
The Chisholm hangs on Lovat’s back
To prove which is the better man;
Lochaber troops out from its glens
To bar the Mackintoshes’ way;
And all the Macs from all the Bens
Hunt the M’Gregors of Glenstrae.

They brawl even in the Hall of State,
And plot and organise deceit,
And at the crossways stand in wait
For broil and battle in the street;
While thieves are raiding on the border,
And doing murder in the North,
And there’s no power of Law or order
Beyond the bridge across the Forth.

Lo! Arran swaggers ’mong his peers,
And lords it like a very king;
A man in vice, a boy in years,
Who women’s hearts is fain to wring.
They come by sudden death who
chance

To stand, apparent, in his way;
And yet he gaily leads the dance,
A trifler and a popinjay.

An evil time of wild unrest,
And malice plotting how to kill,
And sorrow doth our homes infest,
And plague and famine work their will.
And hard the lot is of the poor,
On every hand by ills beset,
With nothing, but their hunger, sure,
And nothing growing, but their debt.

'Tis sorry work in growing age
 To see all love of learning fail,
 And youth turn from the thoughtful page
 To stoups of wine and cogs of ale,
 And lewd-eyed women lead the men,
 Who lead the nation in its path,
 And Priests and Masses back again,
 And all the signs of coming wrath.

May God have pity on the land,
 Give wisdom to the King to rule,
 Let Law and Justice, hand-in-hand,
 Put down the oppressor and his tool,
 Bring back the order of the State,
 And plenty to the poor man's home,
 And make the Kirk her pride abate,
 And let His kingdom truly come.

EUPHANE SKENE

I

BETWEEN the Houses of Leith and
 Skene

Well-a-day!

A deadly feud had for ages been,
 And their hate was the hate of hell,
 I ween,

Well-a-day!

All of the Skenes were of ruth-
 less mood,
 But the young lord Leith was meek
 and good.

2

Said her brothers to Euphane fair,

Well-a-day!

Your speech is like song in the
 morning air,
 And your shining eyes, and your
 golden hair,

Well-a-day!

Will blind him, and bind him fast,
 and then

Trust us to do what is fit for men.

3

Well their meaning she understood,

Well-a-day!

And she said in her heart that it
 was good,

For she heired the hate of the
 ancient feud;

Well-a-day!

From early youth she had breathed it in,
 Nor wist that it was a breath of sin.

4

She plied him now with her win-
 some smile,

Well-a-day!

With luring word and glance and wile;
 But she lost her heart to him the while;

Well-a-day!

And the love was more than the hate
 had been

In the better heart of Euphane Skene.

5

A brief stolen hour in the gloaming dim,

Well-a-day!

That was all she might give to him,
 Dreading the wrath of her kins-
 men grim,

Well-a-day!

And every evening she meant to say,
 I am not worthy, haste thee away.

6

But still as she framed her lips
 to speak,

Well-a-day!

Her tongue refused, for her heart
 was weak;

And she said, He is tender and true
 and meek,

Well-a-day!

And when he shall hear of my
 hateful game,

He will cast me off like a thing
 of shame.

7

They fell upon him with sword
and dirk,

Well-a-day!

As he sat with her near to the old
grey Kirk

Under the boughs of the weeping birk :

Well-a-day!

He was but one, and they were three,
They were her brothers, her lover he.

8

She held him now in a last embrace,

Well-a-day!

The hot blood spurted in her face,
The red blood plashed in their tryst-
ing-place,

Well-a-day!

And fain to stanch the cruel wound,
She rent her robes, and the gashes
bound.

9

She called to him loud, and she called
to him low,

Well-a-day!

In sweet love-words from the heart
that flow,

And never before had she kissed
him so,

Well-a-day!

The pale cold moon looked down upon
A pale cold face where the life
was gone.

10

The pale cold moon that looketh down

Well-a-day!

On moor and garth, on tower and town,
On the peasant's cot and the Prince's
crown,

Well-a-day!

Saw nought that night like the
deep despair

Of the maiden that clasped her
lover there.

11

She did not weep, and she did
not moan,

Well-a-day!

But her eyes were as fire, and her
heart as stone,

And she took her way to the
moors alone,

Well-a-day!

With an eldritch laugh, and a snatch
of song

That startled the night as she
tript along.

12

Off to the moors with the whaup
and fox,

Well-a-day!

Where the glede has her nest in the
ragged rocks,

And the raven follows the sickly flocks ;

Well-a-day!

And never again to the Kirk came she,
Nor yet where her love-haunts wont
to be.

13

Summer and winter, by brooks and
springs,

Well-a-day!

Weird and eerie her songs she sings,
Weird and eerie her laughter rings,

Well-a-day!

And poor folk sain them by the fire,
And milk-maids shiver in lonely byre.

YOUNG ERSKINE OF DUN

THE lands of Dun right fair they be,
Where Esk runs rippling to the sea
Past broomy bank, and daisied lea,
And cheerful cottage door.
From dark Lochee its water flows
By Brechin tower to bright Montrose,
And there into the ocean goes,
Through the crimp sandy shore.

Like it I hoped to make my life
 Tranquil and free from sturt and strife,
 And that, in patient labours rife,
 It should in fruit abound ;
 For I would keep an honoured name
 From taint of wrong, and shade of blame,
 And would exalt my grandsire's fame,
 Who life in learning found.

I would not follow trump or drum,
 Nor handle sword and spear like some,
 But love of wisdom should become
 My heart's desire and aim.
 Let schemers hang about the Court,
 And soldiers to the wars resort,
 And idlers take them into sport,
 And hunt the moors for game ;

But I would be a scholar true,
 And ponder till I thoroughly knew
 Greek sage and tragic poet too,
 With all their wealth of thought ;
 And go to other lands, and look
 For manuscript and printed book,
 Then ponder in the ingle-neuk
 The treasures I had got.

With ample wealth, I did not care
 To heap up gold, nor yet to wear
 Fine robes in some high State affair,
 And ruffle it with Lords.
 I would be rich in things above
 The lusts of sense, and I would prove
 The worth of a more noble love
 For wise and faithful words.

O bright dream of aspiring youth
 Waiting at learning's gate for truth,
 And keeping her way rough or smooth,
 Thy hope has vanished soon.
 For honoured name and good estate
 Brought me an heritage of hate,
 That dooms me to a cruel fate
 Before my day's full noon.

My uncle's envious wrath is fell,
 My aunts are in a league of hell
 To cast on me a witch's spell
 And wind me in my shroud.
 But for my foster-mother brave,
 I had ere now been in my grave,
 And slept beside the breaking wave
 Among the silent crowd.

And now that she is gone, I know
 They drench me with a poison slow,
 And life is waxing faint and low,
 And lo ! the end draws nigh.
 They tell me that they only deal
 With one who has the art to heal ;
 But every potion makes me feel
 That I am doomed to die.

Better I had been cottar's son
 Than heir to all the lands of Dun :
 I had been envied then by none,
 But had of love my share.
 O Bell and Annas, could you go,
 O'er Cairn-a-mount amid the snow,
 For witch's drugs to work this woe,
 And shame the name ye bear ?

Fain would I live a while. But this
 Slow sinking where no mercy is,
 And every sign of love I miss,
 And every touch of grace—
 Oh rather to be dead indeed,
 And watch no more the wicked deed,
 And the hard looks of hate and greed
 That stare from every face.

So death upon him subtly crept,
 And no one mourned for him or wept,
 But justice woke up when he slept,
 And smote though all too late.—
 Woe's me ! that, like a hideous dream,
 The House that all men did esteem
 Should perish in a murderous scheme
 Of dark malignant hate !

THE GERMAN SCOTS

MACKAY of Strathnaver

He summoned his clan,
And plaided and claymored,
They came to a man—
Brisk lads of Strathnaver,
And gallants of Reay,
A thousand brave fellows
In tartan array.

The Leslie and Gordons,
Sent forth, too, their sons,
With Munros and Mackenzies
And Sinclairs and Gunns;
Another good thousand
To cross the North Sea,
And fight under Mansfield
In high Germanie.

For ages our Scots lads
Had "boun" them to France,
And guarded its monarch
With good sword and lance;
But their hearts now were burning
With new faith and hope
To match the grim legions
That fought for the Pope.

Dead was stout Mansfield
Before they touched land,
But the Dane seized the banner
That dropt from his hand:
And straight at his summons
Mackay led his men,
Though at Oldenburg perished
At least three in ten.

At onslaught and leaguer
The Scots bore the brunt,
Held the rear in retreating,
In battle the front;
But the Dane, beat by Tilly,
Soon gave up the lead
In the conflict of nations,
Which fell to the Swede.

It fell to Gustavus,
King, soldier, and knight,
To blend rival peoples,
And order the fight;
And never was army
Inspired as his was
With faith in their leader,
And faith in their cause.

Our Scots bore them bravely
In many a fight
With the great King Gustavus
To witness the sight,
At Leipsic, and Nurnberg,
'Gainst Tilly's Walloons,
And the big Pappenheimers,
And Walstein's dragoons.

Oh, never such a captain
As ours, led the host,
And while he commanded
No battle was lost;
In raid and in skirmish
They still had the best,
From triumph to triumph
Aye onward they pressed.

On the dark day of Lutzen
They followed the bier
Of the death-stricken victor
With many a tear;
Yet Lutzen with glory
Was filled to the brim,
But it seemed a lost battle,
Because they lost him.

And their hearts raged with fury,
Hearing men say
That there had been a traitor,
And death by foul play,
And that one of their number,
Who scaithless had been
When the battle was ended,
No longer was seen.

I know not for certain ;
 But this I do find,
 He who faced the foe always
 Was wounded behind ;
 And a Gordon had lately
 Sat long at a feast
 With a Jesuit cousin,
 A trafficking Priest.

If a Gordon played traitor,
 And Munro sold his sword,
 The men of Strathnaver
 Were true to their word,
 Ever patient and faithful,
 They held by the right,
 And for freedom and justice
 Maintained a good fight.

They failed not brave Banier,
 They stood fast by Horn,
 Though stricken and starving
 And tattered and torn ;
 And they followed Duke Bernard,
 Staunch ever and keen,
 Who mocked at the Snow-king,
 But worshipped his Queen.

But it was to Gustavus
 Their thoughts ever turned,
 And when they recalled him
 Their hearts in them burned.
 As they sat round their watch-fires
 On cold winter nights,
 It was good cheer and comfort
 To talk of his fights.

How he ordered the battle,
 And still led the way,
 As keen for the tussle,
 So calm in the fray ;
 How he saw to his soldiers
 That all had their due,
 And his little name-children
 Of all ranks he knew.

Well he schooled them, and trained
 them
 From childhood for war ;
 But they learned from their Bibles
 What God's soldiers are,
 And they learned to love freedom,
 And yet to obey ;
 And none were more stedfast
 At Naseby than they.

Thinned had their ranks been
 At Oldenburg Pass,
 And they perished by hundreds
 At Lutzen, alas !
 Yet home with old Leslie,
 All covered with scars,
 They came to take part
 In the Covenant wars.

Thrice had the Highlands
 Recruited their ranks,
 And twice on the stricken field
 They received thanks.
 But barely a three-score
 Of bent broken men,
 Ever returned to
 Strathnaver again.

FATHER INNES, S.J.

He was a dark, spare, sickly man,
 And had a rapt look in his eyes,
 Still young in years, but pale and wan ;
 And well himself he could disguise :
 A fisher's garb he sometimes wore,
 As chapman now he bore a pack,
 A valet next at a great man's door,
 But ever the Priest was at his back.

One day he lay in a cave, perdu—
 A cave in a waste and wind-swept
 moor,
 And heard the cry of the wild curlew,
 And thought of the ills he did endure,

And to himself he muttered low,
Impatient of his luckless fate,
For he had trysted then to go
Where death was coming, and would
not wait.

Hark! to the shouts of armèd men,
And the tramp of horses ridden hard,
They search for me o'er hill and glen
To earn a vile law's vile reward,
While one who has my promise true,
And who is needing ghostly aid,
May wait until his hour is due,
And pass unshriven among the dead.

What have I done that I must hide
With the wild beasts in dens and caves,
Or on some sea-girt isle abide,
Where gulls shriek to the breaking
waves?

My father's home I long to see,
But they have lodged a preacher there
To catechise the family,
And trap the children in their snare.

I pass from house to house at night
When there is neither moon nor star,
That I may reach, ere morning light,
Some shelter where the Faithful are;
By faintest tracks I cross the moor,
Oft blinded by the rain and snow,
To creep in by some secret door,
And hide me in a chamber low.

Perchance it is a baron's hall,
Perchance 'tis but a fisher's cot,
But mansion big, or hovel small,
A hiding-place is all I've got—
No home for me, no warm fireside,
No haunt of tender love and peace,
Where fretting cares are laid aside,
And fears of sudden peril cease.

Why should I as an outlaw live
For doing what the Church enjoins,
And giving, as I strive to give,
Poor souls the grace that girds their
loins?

I take my life into my hand—
And never would I grudge the price—
When offering up by Christ's command
The sacramental sacrifice.

I take my soul into my hand,
At times, when, to avoid pursuit,
In some rude ale-house far inland
I ruffle it with sot and brute;
Or worse, when I perchance must go
To kirk, with many sickening qualms,
And groan, and wear a look of woe,
And hear their sermons and their
psalms.

I do it not for men's applause
Whereon the heart oft vainly leans,
I do it for a holy cause
That surely sanctifies the means;
I do it for the Church's sake,
Although I have a sense of sin,
Till full confession I can make,
And priestly absolution win.

Yet wherefore do I now complain
In poor self-pity, when I think
Of the full cup of shame and pain
The heroes of our Order drink,
The tortures that do rack their joints,
The horrors that they have to see,
The aches and grief that God appoints
To perfect their great Charity?

And oh, when in some house of worth
I venture from my hiding-place,
And bring the sacred vessels forth,
And sain them for the work of grace,
And then decorate the altar fit,
And cense the air with incense faint
In castle-chapel, dimly lit,
Or crumbling shrine of some old saint;

And when they all, with one accord,
Before the uplifted Host do kneel,
And worship and adore the Lord,—
Oh the glad recompense I feel!

I know my face then shineth bright,
And every pulse beats clear and strong,
My darkness then is filled with light
And glory and the voice of song.

I bring them comfort, dry their tears,
Their longing souls I satisfy :
What matter then my cares and fears ?
What matter if I live or die ?
E'en let the rogues make harsher laws,
And hang or drown or burn my youth,
A martyr in a holy cause,
They shall not overthrow the truth.

He knew it not ; but close beside
A hot recusant darkly lay,
Who from the same pursuit did hide,
And to the cave had made his way.
As lean and pale and frail was he,
The same rapt look was in his eyes,
He had the same hard weird to dree,
But not the same art for disguise.

For always he must testify
'Gainst Pope and Prelate, and the Priests
That traffic in idolatry,
And keep old Pagan fasts and feasts ;
And hearing what the other spake,
He cried in accents loud and clear,
"I do arrest thee, Priest, and make
Thee captive of my bow and spear."

So there they stood up face to face,
And looked into each other's eyes,
And both were silent for a space,
And touched as with a strange surprise,
They were so like, so wan and lean,
So hot in theologic strife,
So sure of all their thoughts, and keen,
And had so frail a hold of life.

Then said the Priest, "Go, fool ! be
still ;
I've been a soldier in my day,
And carry arms, and I will kill
The man who would my life betray.

Yet care I not my hands to soil
With your dull peasant's sluggish
blood ;
Hence to your proper task of toil,
And plod among the muck and mud."

The other answered, "Lying Priest,
Deceiver of the souls of men,
Your time will come, but I, at least,
Will leave you in God's hands till then.
Far better toil at meanest task
Than traffic in deceit like thee,
And daily wear a lying mask,
And practise plain idolatry."

Then silent both, in scorn or hate,
They heard the baffled troopers rage,
And marked their hot pursuit abate,
Each brooding o'er a well-conned
page ;

One read his book of Hours, and one
Through chapters of his Bible ranged,
And when the lingering day was done,
Their hearts abided still unchanged.

And parting sullenly at last,
They went their several ways ; but yet,
When many troubled years had passed,
Once more for one brief hour they met :
A Priest was carted to his fate,
A Whig brought to the gallows high ;
I doubt if either ceased to hate—
I know that neither feared to die.

THE MACGREGORS

LANDLESS and nameless,
By clachan and grange,
Among foes that are shameless,
And friends that are strange,
We skulk, but are tameless,
And live for revenge.

Here we are Campbells,
And there we are Grahames ;

We join in their rambles,
Take part in their games ;
Till we make their homes shambles
And wrap them in flames.

Outcasts from Glenfalloch,
Glenstrae and Glengyle,
Balquidder and Balloch,
And Katrine's green isle,
Our red deer they gralloch,
Our graves they defile.

For the hapless MacGregor
There is no law nor kirk,
But only the trigger,
The sword and the dirk,
And for a grave-digger
The crow in the mirk.

All faith and opinion
They wholly ignore ;
Our only dominion
The mists of Benmore,
Or the crags of Stobinon
Where wild the winds roar.

Hunted for ever
By day and by night
Over moor, loch, and river,
And bleak mountain height,
We empty our quiver
Each day in a fight.

The grouse on the heather
Has its season of rest,
And the hare in rough weather
By fear is not pressed ;
But MacGregor has neither
Close time, nor safe nest.

Estranged and escheated,
No birthrights we own,
Where our homes were once seated
Grass hides the hearthstone,
Like brutes we are treated,
Like brutes we have grown.

They heed no denials
Of guilt and bloodshed,
Nor wait they for trials,
Or proof to be led,
To pour out the vials
Of wrath on our head.

But there's a to-morrow
That comes soon or late,
When Vengeance shall borrow
The semblance of Fate,
And they shall have sorrow,
And we wreak our hate.

And the braes of Balquidder
Shall see us again,
When the bloom's on the heather,
And the sun on the rain,
As we bring back together
The tale of the slain.

THE LITTLE PILGRIMS

A TRADITION OF THE PLAGUE IN
ABERDEEN

FATHER was killed the year before,
When the Gordons raided the town
one day,
And now we were sitting in grief
once more,
For the Pest had taken mother away.

There were only three of us now alive,
Me and Willie and little Kate ;
Katie was three, and Willie was five,
And I was the oldest, nearly eight.

None of our neighbours came to see
Whether we were alive or dead,
The Plague made all of them cowardly,
And they passed our door with a look
of dread.

But we had an aunt in Elgin town,
A childless woman, and well to do,
Who was fain to have Willie once
for her own,
To brighten the days that lonely grew.

But though we were poor, and it was ill
To win bread for us, and keep us trim,
Mother still clung to her little Will,
And never could bear to part with him.

I saw we must go to Auntie, now ;
But the way was long, and the days
were hot,
And thieves were on every road, I trow,
And the Plague was in every likely spot.

Yet go we must, so I went and slid
My hand into the crock, where lay
A little purse which mother had hid,
She told me, against a rainy day.

It was not much, but I thought by wit
And thrift and carefulness how to spend,
If the thieves on the road did not
come at it,
It would carry us on to our journey's
end.

Then, having seen to the children's food,
I told them we would as pilgrims go,
And fare for a while in field and wood
Where the little birds sing, and the
daisies grow.

Merry they were these words to hear,
And oh so gaily they questioned me ;
Would I build them a nest like the
dainty birds,
And rock them to sleep on a swing-
ing tree ?

They would hunt the butterflies in
the sun,
And for the yellow bee's byke would
quest,

And watch how the rabbits sport
and run,
And the pewits flutter to hide their
nest.

It was early morning still when we
Left the pest-stricken town behind ;
Blithe was the blue of the summer sea,
And sweet the breath of the morning
wind.

When we came to the Don, we had
to go
Along by its side, and across the bridge
That spans the black water, deep
and slow,
With bonnie Balgownie upon the ridge.

By this time Katie had weary grown,
So I carried her on my back a while,
Will at my side came toddling on,
And we made in this manner a long
Scots mile.

Not far from the road, a bourtree grew
That would shade us well from the
noonday heat,
And a wee burn rippled on briskly
through
The grass, where we bathed our
hands and feet.

There on our bread and milk we
dined,
Blithe as the glad birds on the tree,
Which picked up the crumbs that we
left behind,
As we waited a little way off to see.

That night, low down among pleasant
broom,
In a little hollow we snugly lay,
It was better far than a small close
room,
And we slept till long past break of
day.

Sweet was our bed, and our slumber
sweet,

And sweet the breath of hay-scented air;
So I said to the little ones it was meet
That Pilgrims should gather for morn-
ing prayer.

Mother had done this every day,
For she said that it made her heart
feel strong
To read of the new and living way,
And to sing God's praise in a God-
given song.

Some verses then of the Book we read,
And sang together the Shepherd Psalm,
And we all knelt down on the grass,
and said
The children's prayer, and were meek
and calm.

A short way off I could see a row
Of turf-built huts by the roadside plain,
And hurried me off with speed to know
If milk could be got for the love of gain.

But outside the clachan I heard a cow
Straining her tether, and whisking
her tail,
And I said to myself, as I heard her low,
She is waiting the maid and the
milking pail.

Straightway into the byre I ran—
I had learnt before with cows to deal—
The milk came free, and I filled my can,
But I left a coin, for I would not steal.

Our fare was good, and we rose to go'
Not through the village, but round about
Among fields where daisies and butter-
cups grow,
And we pelted each other with laugh
and shout.

To the ford of Ythan we came ere night,
And close to my bosom wee Katie
I drew,

Willie held on to my garments tight,
And so together we waded through.

But into Ellon we might not go,
Though the little ones now were
weary grown,
They drove us away with a threat or
a blow,
For the dread of the plague was in
every town.

At a cottage, a good mile off, I spied
A woman sad with a kindly face,
And "O my bonnie, wee bairn,"
she cried,
As she lifted up Kate in a fond embrace.

My baby was just like her, she said,
With the sunny face, and the curly pow,
But she lies in the kirkyard cold and
dead,
And oh, but my heart is empty now.

She made us food, and she bade us eat,
She cheered our hearts which were
sunken low,
She gave to us also store of meat,
And told us truly the way to go.

That night we lay in a warm hay-rick,
And slept till the sun was high above,
And said our prayer in the morning air
With hearts that were full of peace
and love.

Another day, and another yet
Passed as we cheerily fared along,
Sometimes racing a little bit,
Sometimes singing a little song.

That was the last of our happy times,
For now to a hamlet I must run,
That lay low down among sickly
limes,
To buy us food, for our bread was
done.

I left the little ones on a bank
 With wild thyme and pansies their laps
 to fill;
 The air was hot and heavy and dank,
 Yet it gave me somehow a shivering
 chill.

And when I came to the hamlet, lo!
 An awful silence held the street,
 Which smote my heart with a boding
 of woe;
 But I said we must have bread to eat.

There were no children out at play,
 No women were sitting on step or stair,
 Hammer and saw in silence lay,
 And there rose no smoke in the
 sultry air.

There was no gleam of the red peat
 fires,
 No careful mothers had left their bed,
 The cattle were moaning in the byres,
 And the rats in the gutters lay dying
 or dead.

Never a dog in the place did bark,
 Never a caged bird tried to sing,
 All the windows were blind and dark,
 And a horror lay brooding on every-
 thing.

Only a shambling idiot there
 Along the causeway came stumbling
 on,
 And cried with a voice of dull despair,
 "Dead, dead! all of them dead and
 gone."

Then I turned in terror, and ran with
 speed
 To the bank where I left the bairns
 at play,
 For I felt as if death was in every
 breath,
 And I must get Katie and Willie away.

I told them there was a Dragon there
 Down in the hamlet among the trees,
 And his breath had poisoned the
 wholesome air,
 And he could devour us all with ease.

We must not go near it, for our lives,
 But hurry away to some happier spot,
 Where we could break our fast, and
 make
 Sport of the Dragon who found us not.

We took to a path that crossed a moor,
 And there for a while we lost our way;
 But the air on the moor was clear
 and pure,
 And we fed on ripe cranberries well
 that day.

At night we lay in a woodland shed
 Made of pine branches loosely bound;
 The deer lay near on their bracken bed,
 And the fox slunk past on his nightly
 round.

I could not sleep, and when morning
 broke,
 And the light wind whispered among
 the trees,
 And the little ones from their dreams
 awoke,
 They were heavy and fractious and ill
 to please.

I told them stories, and laughed
 and sang,
 And said in an hour they should eat
 of the best:
 And I showed them how lightly the
 wild deer sprang
 Up to their feet from their bracken nest.

So then they began to leap and run,
 And toss their heads, as if they too bore
 Branching horns upon forehead dun,
 And we took to the weary road once
 more.

Yet did my heaviness still abide
All through the hours of that day of
pain ;

I had been so careful their steps to
guide

Far from the Pest, was it all in vain ?

Willie grew better, but little Kate
Fevered more as the sun rose high,
And folk on the road that we, now and
then, met

Took to the far side, and hurried by.

And so our sweet little Katie died
That night as the stars came forth
once more,

Lying low on my lap, she sighed,
"I'm coming, mother," and all was
o'er.

And weeping low, and wailing loud,
We scraped a shallow grave off the
way,

And there, without coffin or sheet or
shroud,

Left her alone till the Judgment Day.

What followed after I hardly know,
It is blurred with sorrow, and all
confused ;

We went on still, but our pace was slow,
And sometimes grossly we were abused.

One day a sturdy beggar whined
For money, he said, to buy him food,
Though I noticed, myself, that the
rogue had dined

Better a deal than ever we could.

Therefore I would not give him aught,
And he took from his girdle a gully
knife,

And held its point against Willie's
throat,

Swearing that straight he would have
his life.

There was no help near ; so I took
out my purse,

Which he snatched from my hand, and
all that I had ;

It was not much, and that made
him curse,

And vow that the coins were false
and bad.

What should we do now, robbed of
our all ?

We could not beg, and we would not
steal ;

We were among strangers, children
small,

And I hardly could either think or feel.

All through the night I lay awake,
And tossed on the sun-baked hardened
sod ;

And prayed though it seemed as my
heart would break,

And I got no farther than just
"O God !"

But suddenly came this thought to
me, Lord,

When Thy disciples were walking
with Thee

Through cornfields, hearkening to
Thy word,

And they were an-hungred too, as we,

They plucked the ears of corn, and ate,
And Thou didst never their act forbid ;

And may not we now, in like
sore strait

Do as Thy servants that day did ?

That gave me light then, and as
we walked

By the great fields of yellow corn,

We munched the milky groats, and
talked

Good words, for it was the Sabbath
morn.

I thought it right too that we should go
With others to worship God, and pray ;
And it did us good, I am sure, although
We mostly slept in the kirk that day.

And ere had sunk that Sabbath sun
We came to Elgin town at last,
And now our pilgrimage was done,
And all our troubles were overpast.

Auntie, it seemed, was known to all,
And they said I could not fail to find
Her house where it stood by the
Cloister wall,
With the great Cathedral just behind.

Humbly I knocked at the big oak
door,

For it was a stately house to see,
And I, in my fear, did tremble sore
Lest she might be ashamed of me.

Not many minutes we had to wait,
And when she came to us, all I said
Was, "Auntie, this is Willie, and Kate
Died on the road, and mother is dead."

Kinder greeting could none have had ;
Willie she clasped to her bosom,
and wept,
Partly sorrowful, partly glad,
Meanwhile my hand in her own
she kept.

There was nothing too dainty for us
to eat,
Nothing too handsome for us to wear,
With her own hands she washed
our feet,
And tenderly combed our matted hair.

When I told her the tale of our
pilgrimage,
And how the thief took our purse away,
She uttered some words in a holy rage
Mother would never have let me say.

Soon our troubles were all forgot,
Yet not our sorrows, for when I think
Of mother and Katie, my heart is hot,
And in the night-watch I have tears
to drink.

We have all we could wish of meat
and drink ;

But oh for the mother's guiding hand,
And the little one's smile, which was
like a blink

Of sunshine to me in a weary land !

JOHN NAPIER OF MERCHISTON

MERCHISTON TOWER stands, lone and
apart,

On the high Borough moor, among
elms and limes,

And lone and apart were the thoughts
of his heart ;

While the struggle was brewing, in
kirk and in mart,

To mend the ills of the hapless times.

Other his labours, and other his cares,
Other the ends that he sought to
gain,

Other his dreams and his hopes
than theirs

Who busied themselves with the
State's affairs,

Or stood up for freedom with hand
and brain.

By a paper, writ over with cipher-
ing neat,

The master sat in loose-flowing robes,
Unbonneted head, and slippered feet,

Eager to see his long labour complete,
In a chamber littered with books

and globes.

Toil and trouble he never had spared,
 But year after year had wrought at
 his theme,
 Often been baffled, but never despaired,
 Still had come back, and his errors
 repaired ;
 And now he was sure that it was not
 a dream.

His task was nigh finished ; the end
 drew near,
 As page after page he threw down on
 the floor,
 A great pile of writing, where truth
 did appear
 With every new scroll growing ever
 more clear,
 Convincing the reason that doubted
 before.

With forehead deep-furrowed he wrote
 every word,
 The strain was so hard, and he toiled
 till the sweat
 That beaded his brow trickled down
 on his beard,
 And the sound of his heavy, hard
 breathing was heard
 Like the panting of athlete that
 struggles with Fate.

Then there came a glad light on his
 face, and his head
 Was lifted up grandly and proudly
 the while,
 "I have found it, and 'stablished it
 clearly," he said,
 The Law that God wrought by that
 day when He made
 The stars in their courses, and measured
 their mile.

Hear what the Kirk says, and you
 might suppose
 He has no other thoughts save about
 His own Name,

And the glory, befitting His greatness,
 which flows
 From the saving or damning of souls,
 whom He chose
 To show forth His grace or His wrath
 upon them.

But many His thoughts are, all old
 and yet new—
 Mathematic, mechanic, and chemic—
 and we,
 In our brooding and searching to find
 out the True,
 Do but glimpse, with long toil, what
 He perfectly knew
 From the first, when He held the young
 world on His knee.

Yea, many His thoughts are, and many
 His cares,
 Not only for souls, but for dead,
 silent things,
 Thoughts of number and form, of
 circles and squares,
 Of the grass on the field, and the dews
 and the airs
 And the salts that it lives on, and
 sweets that it brings.

And one of His thoughts He has given
 me to find,
 Never dreamt of before, and to follow
 it on
 To results that enlarge and deliver
 the mind
 From bonds that did hitherto fetter
 and bind
 The pursuit of light that leads up to
 His throne.

Lo ! the fruit of long patience, hard
 thinking, and pains,
 And science, by its means, shall range
 over space,

As easy as merchant can reckon his
gains
Without failure or flaw to bewilder
his brains,
Or uncertain shadow of doubt on
his face.

How simple it looks, now the key
has been found !
How hopeless and dark it looked
often to me !
God's thoughts are as simple as they
are profound,
Yet hard as the path over untravelled
ground,
Till a way has been hewn which the
simple can see.

Hark ! men are fighting where peace
should have been,
Clashing their sword - blades, and
shouting their cries ;
If they but knew all the triumph serene
When a great Law of Nature is
certainly seen,
And God's secret given to the patient
and wise !

What are the schemes which their poor
lives devour ?
What are the ends they're so eager to
gain ?
They do but strive to get honour and
power,
And wield them in pride for a brief
little hour—
This while the world lasts still shall
remain.

Truth is the one power to loose or
to bind,
Not to oppress, but to set the world free,
Power over Nature by masterful mind,
Power to enlarge the great thoughts
of mankind,
And by obeying Law its Lords to be.

LIVINGSTONE'S WOOING

I HAD gone to a friend for Communion
week,
And when it was over my soul was sad,
For I felt that my heart had been
cold and bad
For lack of the grace I had failed
to seek.

The folk did not see it, some even
opined
That, with the live coal from the
altar fired,
I had spoken at times like a man
inspired,
But it was not the fire of a heavenly
mind.

For now it came home to me, clear
as light,
I had sought but my own things, not
the Lord's ;
Had tickled men's ears with enticing
words
That could not have helped any soul
in the fight.

Then a shadow of trouble came over
my face,
And I doubted if ever I had a call
To the work I once thought that I
loved more than all—
Proclaiming the riches of God's large
grace.

My friend to cheer me then, said that
he knew
My word that day had been greatly
blessed,
For some had been quickened, and
some had found rest,
And some had got comfort sure and
true.

Still the cloud lay on me, and I saw
My heart in its faithlessness clearly
laid bare,
Vain and self-seeking ; and dull despair
Seemed to be clutching me with its
claw.

Then said my friend—for he was a
friend
In good and evil all through my life—
“John, what you want is a loving wife
To bring these thoughts to a whole-
some end :

“And there is May Fleming might take
you in hand ;
She is good and true, she is bright
and kind,
Of a cheerful temper, and pious mind,
And she's beautiful too as the Prom-
ised land.”

I knew of old he was fond of his jest ;
But surely that was a flippant word
To a man who was wrestling for the
Lord
With the powers of darkness in his
breast.

Therefore I rose up, and silently
Went to my chamber and to my
knees,
For I knew there was nothing like
prayer to ease
The load that was lying so heavy
on me.

But still that speech of his rang in
my head ;
And all through my pleadings and
groans and cries
May's face rose, smiling, before mine
eyes,
And I wandered in prayer, and
dreamed instead.

I never had thought of life yet in that
way,
But only of making my calling sure,
And getting my heart more clean and
pure—
A task that seemed heavier every day.

And I never had thought of May
Fleming that way,
Though I often had noted her up-
turned face
As she drank in humbly the word of
grace,
Or folded her little white hands to pray.

Yet she had been to me but a lamb of
the flock
Whom I strove to lead, in the narrow
way,
To the pastures green that are found
always
By the river that flows from the
stricken Rock.

And a faithless shepherd I needs
must be
If I led her now to myself, not Him,
And kindled a human love, poor and
dim,
For the love divine I had longed to see.

That made me surer than ever before
That I was not fit for the Master's
work ;
For my soul was tossed, like a help-
less cork,
And drifted on to a barren shore.

Then I went in grief to my friend,
and said,
“You have put a temptation in my way ;
When I turn to my books, or try
to pray,
May Fleming I cannot get out of
my head.”

But he only laughed, and answered, "Well, Let her come down from your head to your heart, And make her home there, and never depart; You will preach all the better when you can tell "Of love that unifies man and wife, Love that is faithful, meek, and true, Singing a song that is ever new, Love that is more to you even than life; "For you'll have in your soul the master-key To open treasures of Love divine, And draw for your people the mystic wine That will cheer them, when days of darkness be." I was not satisfied; yet I know After that I was more at peace; The strife in my soul did partly cease, For the seed he had sown began to grow. Not that I loved her yet as one Should love the maid that shall be his bride; But like my shadow she kept at my side All through the hours, till the day was done. I saw her face as I read my books, Even in the darkness it was there Looking ever so sweet and fair, And I heard her voice in the winds and brooks. What could it all mean? what should I do? I could not study, I scarce could pray, And I felteach Sabbath, my heart to-day Was not in my work, and my people knew.	I must give up the task that I did so ill, Must put out the light that would lead astray; For I had no rest by night or day, But went on dreaming about her still. Once my thoughts had been all of Him Who bore the cross for His chosen folk; But now to the sorrowful truth I woke That the faith I once lived by had all grown dim. But one day I met her on the high road, All by herself, and stepping free; My text for next Sabbath was work- ing in me, And I felt it then as a heavy load. I told her my trouble, and she threw out Modestly only a hint, a thought, But it suggested much, and brought Clearness to me instead of doubt. Surely that impulse God had given, Which made me disburden my mind to one So able to make the dry well run, Free and full, with the grace of Heaven. That sermon was something fresh and new, And shone with a light I had never before, I seemed to get to the very core, And searched the mystery through and through. Therefore I went to her mother, and told What May had done for my work that day, And the hope it begot in me, that they Would not reckon my love to be over-bold.
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It was not marriage-love yet, nor did
I get that till days and weeks were
passed,
And only by prayer it came at last,
But it burned like a fire then, and
would not be hid.

I had much ado to moderate it,
To keep it from taking the Master's
place,
With the light of her love for the
light of His face,
Though I tried to keep it in measure fit.

And of all God's gifts to me, truly
the best,
Save only the Spirit of grace and truth,
Was the wife that he gave to my
troubled youth,
And the home that she made me of
peace and rest.

WARRISTON AND THE SIGNING OF THE COVENANT

ENOUGH for me to have lived to see
This glorious day, and its godly work,
When our nobles have buried their
ancient feuds,
And our merchants have left their
gains and goods
To sign our bond in the Greyfriars'
Kirk.

Truly my heart leaped up in me, while
Douglas and Hamilton, Athole and
Mar,
Pressed on the heels of Montrose
and Argyll,
And Lindsay and Lauderdale walked
down the aisle
With Kennedy, Cunningham, Scott,
and Carr.

Of all our Houses of ancient fame
Only the Gordons held them back ;
Hume and Maxwell and Elliot came,
And Stewart and Bruce would have
deemed it shame
If men of the Royal blood were slack.

Few of the Chiefs of the clans were
there ;
Clanronald, Macdonald, the Chisholm,
Locheil,
All lay close 'mong their mountains bare ;
But they count not for much in a
State affair,
Unless there be cattle to raid and steal.

Mackintosh sat by the fire and drank,
Cluny was busy about his game,
Seaforth was playing the Lewsmen
a prank,
And all of them truly were papists
rank,
While hardly one could have signed
his name.

We looked not for them, and little
was lost
That they were not there, for they
always bring
Quarrels with them as they brag
and boast,
And dirks too are drawn, and swords
are crossed,
And tongues that babbled begin to
sting.

There was not room in the kirk for
more
Than a tithe of those who were fain
to write ;
So they spread the sheets on the
gravestones hoar,
All the way out to the kirkyard
door,
And many who signed there wept
outright.

Oh what a sight it was, all the land,
Gentle and simple, humble and high,
Setting their seal to our Covenant band,
That vowed the people, with heart
and hand,
To stand by the Cause and the Kirk,
or die.

I pricked my finger, and dipped the
pen
In a drop of my own heart's blood
to write :
It was but a drop, but it pledged me
then
That every drop in each throbbing
vein
Should freely be given to win the
fight.

Of course, I know there were not a
few
Who felt no glow of our patriot fire,
Who cared not for freedom or truth
or right,
But loved the darkness, and shunned
the light,
For the lust of gain was their one
desire.

Stoutly they clave, like the maw of
the grave,
To the wealth of the Monks, and
the Bishop's lands,
And all the pillage that did avenge
The ills of the past with ills as strange,
When they plundered the Kirk as
they broke her bands.

All they heeded was wealth of gain,
All they dreaded was loss of gear ;
But their swords are good if their
hearts are vain,
And we'll need them all in the stress
and strain
That will try our mettle this coming
year.

God grant that they may stand fast
that day ;
But some are ambitious, and some are
proud,
And some are fain just to get their
own way ;
And there may be a Judas. Who can say
What kind of folk may be hid in a
crowd ?

Is it right to join hands with them,
in view
Of their alien mind. Were not Gideon's
band,
The gallant three hundred, staunch
and true,
Better by far than a motley crew
Who care for nought but the teind
and land ?

Some of God's servants will have it so,
For they say He can save by many
or few,
And they blame me as one who is
fain to go,
By worldly policy. Yet I know
We shall need every man to carry it
through.

But the people are stirred, for they all
have heard
Of the quarrel 'twixt King and
Parliament,
And their hearts are hot, and they
will not yield
To Charles or Laud, till, on stricken
field,
One side or other its force has spent.

I am no soldier, and I shrink
From battle and blood as things
abhorred ;
Yet now that we stand on the deadly
brink,
No more may I counsel peace, but think
Of the Kirk and its only King and Lord.

Where the Spirit of God is, men are
free ;
Where the spirit of truth is, men are
strong ;
And strong and free shall our country
be
When the storm is past, which we
plainly see,
Laden with thunder, now trooping
along.

GASK AND MONTROSE

I was with the great Montrose
All through his grand campaigns,
When he swept o'er the hills and
the snows,
With the wild curlews and the crows,
And the winds and the clouds and
the rains.

Was never a leader like him
To know what his lads could do ;
There were rivers and lakes to swim,
And moors where the mists lay dim,
But he burst on the foe ere they knew.

We were neighbours of old in
Strathearn,
And I joined him before Tippermuir,
Marched close by his side up to Nairn,
And fought by his side at Auldearn,
Where the Whigs of our ruin made sure.

And oh how we raided Argyll,
Till the Campbells had hardly a roof
Or shieling, for mile after mile,
And we drove off their cattle the while,
And left scarce a horn or a hoof.

They'll not soon forget how our men
Then harried their clachans and byres ;
There was wailing in every green glen,
And burning on every high Ben,
But laughter at our watchfires.

When we marched through a blinding
snowstorm
To Inverlochry, Argyll
Lay down on his ship, like a worm,
But our gallant young leader's brave
form
Ever marched in our front with a smile.

As they spied us, they faced right about,
But our claymores were thirsting for
blood,
And we rushed on their ranks with a
shout,
And broke them in stark, utter rout,
And drank the red stream like a flood.

We spoiled the fat burghers of Perth,
And if checked just for once at
Dundee,
At Kilsyth their dead covered the
earth,
Like swathes, when the reapers with
mirth
Lay the ripe corn low on the lea.

Oh the spoil that we gathered that day
When our banner waved o'er Aberdeen!
Though our forces then melted away,
As they started for home with their
prey,
And our musters next morning were
lean.

That was the worst of the job ;
War with them was a foray for gain,
The foe was scarce more than a mob,
Whom they hasted to kill and to rob,
And be off with their plunder again.

I was young, and I did not much care,
So long as the sword did not sleep,
Though they trooped off with all
kinds of ware,
Pots and pans and cloth-webs, like a
fair,
And droves of fat cattle and sheep.

The Highlands were swarming with
men,
All idle, and keen for a fight,
And for one that dropt off there were
ten
To fill up our thinning ranks, when
The Whigs once again were in
sight.

Yet doubtless our leader must feel,
When his army was melting away;
It was hard to know how best to deal
With fellows more eager to steal
Than to stand by the flag and obey.

But I had not the care of command,
All I wanted was just a good fight,
And of course to bring back to
the land
The rule of the king, and to stand
By the Church and Episcopal right.

I was never so cheerful and gay,
Though some of my comrades had
dropt,
For I thought we had played out the
play,
And the Whigamores, losing the day,
Their wicked devices had stopped.

So one night, the moon shining clear
On the Tweed, where I stood with
Montrose,
I said, "What a glorious year!
We have scattered the rogues far
and near,
And we'll have back the king, ere
he knows.

"In the land of his fathers, at least,
He shall have his own once more
In spite of the Presbyterian Priest,
And the new-fangled Puritan yeast
That swells in their hearts at the
core."

But he looked very sad, and he sighed,
"We have poured out rivers of blood,
And beaten them—yes," he replied,
"But we've not gained a man to
our side;

'Tis like thrashing the tide at
its flood.

"We have swept o'er the land, and
the shock
Has filled them with fear and unrest;
No longer they flout us and mock,
Yet I know that the bulk of the folk
Hate the sight of a kilt like the
pest.

"For the king our lads care not a jot;
Their king is the chief of the clan;
Not once for the Cause have they
fought,
But only to better their lot,
Or avenge an old feud when they can.

"No more for the Church do they heed,
For order or worship or rite;
Perhaps for the Pope and his creed
They might take to the sword, but
they need
No faith as a plea for a fight.

"I am weary of half-savage men
Who seek but some gain to the tribes;
And the Whigs have been beaten in
vain,
Ere long they will bind us again
By the parchments and quirks of
their scribes.

"And I'm weary of these civil wars,
And the desolate homes they have
made,
And the wide waste fields, and the
scars
That are aching under the stars,
And the widows bewailing their dead.

"After all men have said, too, and sung,
Civil war brings its bitter remorse,
When you hear your own dear mother-
tongue
Appealing for mercy among
The hoofs of your iron-shod horse."

And that was the man, who, they said,
Cared only for battle and strife,
And to look on the dying and dead,
And who reckoned the blood he had
shed
The glory and joy of his life.

THE SECTARY

CORPORAL HOGSWASH of Grimsby,
One of "The Brazen wall,"
Could fight and exhort,
Réposte and retort
With the Word, or the sword, or a ball;
He was equally handy with all.

He was fain to lord it supreme
O'er the weavers and cottars of Fife,
As he led on his troop,
With a halloo and whoop,
Ever foremost in fray and in strife,
And kept folk in fear of their life.

One day, in the kirk, he sat down
On the stool of repentance, for choice,
With a laugh and a wink—
Sign of shrewd morning drink—
And his soul it did greatly rejoice,
In this manner, to lift up his voice.

He called himself "Seeker" or
"Waiter,"
Though he ne'er stayed to listen
or learn;
And loudly he swore
At the open kirk-door
That sinners should now have their turn,
Whose hearts in them hotly did burn.

"Lo! you now, up there in the box,
Sir Presbyterian Priest," he began,
"We poor sinful folk,
The black sheep of the flock,
Will hear your rebuke, as we can,
If you will but hit fair, like a man."

"I am ready our sins to confess,
Mostly sins of the flesh, I admit;
We are given to strong liquors
In flagons or beakers,
And to handsome young maids that
are fit
On the knee of a soldier to sit."

"That's the worst can be said about us,
And for that you have set up this
stool,
And ring your cracked bell,
And stand there and tell
Of your Kirk, and its good godly rule,
And Tophet ordained for the fool."

"Now, spare not; his seat likes me
well;
But when you have spoken your word,
I have somewhat to say,
In my own homely way,
To you who are serving the Lord
With your sins, which He ever
abhorred."

"Oh, you're silent, are you, to-day?
You leave all the talking to me:
Very well, I am ready;
You just stand up there steady,
My dear, erring brother, and see
What other folk know you to be."

"What of your envy and pride,
Hypocrisy, lies, and deceit,
Your high Sabbath-keeping,
With the shepherds all sleeping,
And the wolf at the door, and the feet
That are swift to shed blood in
the street?"

“Lo! the violence, strife, and contention;
 (See Habakkuk, 1st and 3rd),
 Your nest may be high,
 But the stone shall cry
 From the wall, and its voice shall
 be heard,
 Like the hoot of an ill-omened bird.

“I sit on the Penitent’s stool,
 Where many poor souls have been
 shamed
 With heads bowed like willows
 For small peccadilloes;
 Meanwhile your worse vices, untamed,
 Have thriven unrebuked and unblamed.

“Yea, I sit on the Penitent’s stool,
 Though ’tis fitter for you than for me;
 Go build up a creed,
 Not of word, but of deed,
 And meanwhile come down here, and be
 Rebuked by the sinful and free.

“We have broken the yoke of the
 King,
 We have cast off the bonds of the
 Pope,
 And we will not submit
 To the rein and the bit
 Of the Presbyter Priestlings, that hope
 With Noll and his army to cope.

“For the work we have done God
 has sealed
 With victory everywhere
 In great feats of war;
 As late at Dunbar,
 So at Worcester His arm was laid bare,
 In the great crowning mercy wrought
 there.

“And we’re free from the bondage
 of Law,
 For the Spirit has made us free;
 The Command is not meant
 For the latter-day saint,

But for those who will still bend
 the knee
 Where the Priest and the steeple-
 house be.”

Then he strode up the high pulpit
 stair,
 While the minister said with a groan,
 “Ho! my people depart
 With God’s peace in your heart;
 For bread he will give you a stone,
 Let him do his blaspheming alone.”

The flock with mixed feelings were
 stirred,
 Some groaned, and some laughed, and
 some wept,
 Some loudly shouted,
 Some mocked and flouted,
 But the more part silence kept,
 And sorrowful homeward crept.

The Corporal preached for an hour
 About Oliver’s power and trust,
 About vials and trumps,
 And Parliament rumps,
 And the sword of the Lord, and its
 rust,
 Till his throat was as dry as March
 dust.

BURLEIGH ON MAGUS MOOR

THE turncoat! the traitor!
 We sent him to London to plead our
 cause,
 And our Covenant band with the All-
 creator,
 And the rights that are ours by our
 ancient laws,
 And lo! he comes back with a mitred
 head,
 False to all he had sworn and said.

My Lord, the Archbishop !
That's how they usher his Grace now in,
For our clerical cooks are fain to
dish up
The Pope's old orders of pride and sin.
No doubt, he will be Cardinal soon—
Cardinal Judas ! the crafty loon !

Oh, he was to have brought us
Times of peace from a gracious King ;
Only trust him, so he besought us,
And we should have grateful songs
to sing
For a quiet land, and a faithful Kirk
Cheerfully doing its Master's work.

But our troubles and sorrows
Are harder than ever they were before,
And dark as to-day's are, darker
to-morrow's,
With lies in the air, and spies at the
door ;
For the boot and the thumbkin and
the rack
Are all that his graceless Grace
brought back.

It is fine and prison
If we meet on a moor to hear the truth,
Braving the blasts of a stormy season
Rather than prophets that prophesy
smooth ;
And it is a gibbet, if we withstand
A cornet of horse and his swearing
band.

We have loved freedom,
And for its sake have fought and bled,
Faced proud armies, and did not heed
them,
Holding our own among dying and
dead ;
And now shall we tamely cower before
Lawyers and Priests that scourge us
sore ?

List ! Rathillet,
Hear you his Lordship's six-horsed
coach
Bearing him on to his well-earned billet,
With an out-runner heralding his
approach—
Strange are the ways of heaven and
grim,
For we did not come here to ambush
him.

It was for another
We waited, one of his hateful tools,
Who tries all the arts of hell to
smother
The truth in Fife, where he sits and
rules
With the boot for our bones, and a
rope for our breath,
In the name of this high Arch-priest
of death.

The Lord hath delivered
The traitor into our hand this day,
And he who is slack at the work hath
severed
Himself from the cause, for which good
men pray—
You've a private quarrel, Rathillet, I
know,
But you'll stand by our deed, though
you deal not a blow.

So we grouped on the moorland,
Pledged and sworn to the fell, stern
deed,
And smote the old man with a swift
and sure hand,
And saw the gashed wounds on him
gape and bleed—
'Twas a public work, and every one
there
Had to thrust in his weapon, and take
his share.

ERICSTANE BRAE

WE had gathered that night for prayer
On the hill above Clyde-burn head,
When a whisper went round, as we
came to the ground,
That our Leader and Preacher was dead.

The troopers had come on his track
As he sped down the bank of the Daur;
They were seen to follow, with whoop
and halloo,
While he made for the Buckshead scour.

Shots had soon after been heard,
And blood had been certainly spilt;
So we reckoned it plain that he had
been slain,
And we doubted not whose was the
guilt.

Sad, then, and stricken at heart,
We were turning to hasten away,
When some one said, "If our leader
is dead,
We have all the more need to pray."

Unbonneted all of us stood,
Till we heard a whaup's shrill cry;—
We had posted men at the foot of
the glen
To warn us if danger were nigh;

And that was the signal agreed,
Which we heard now at Clyde-burn
head,
And we held our breath, and were
still as death,
Where we stood on the high water-
shed.

We could hear the beat of our hearts,
But by and by came a cheer,
And out of the mist a form uprist,
And our pastor himself drew near.

The gloaming had gathered grey,
And the light was fading fast,
So we did not see, at first, how he
Had changed since we saw him last.

For he had been a stalwart man,
Big both in body and limb,
And his simple dress, in its homeliness,
Had always been neat and trim.

Now broken he was and bent,
And his face was pale as death,
He was soiled with mud, and stained
with blood,
And he gasped at each painful breath,

As he wearily dragged his feet
To the great grey stone on the hill,
Where he often had stood to do us
good,
And to strengthen our heart and will.

There for a moment he paused,
Girding himself to speak,
And the hearts of the crowd were
wholly bowed
To see the strong man so weak.

"My hours are numbered," he said,
"But I hasted to send you home,
For they knew that to-night we
should meet on the height
Where the Clyde-burn frets in foam.

"Earlshall and his hard-riding troop
Saw me come down by the Daur,
And followed me close, o'er moor
and moss,
And on by the Buckshead scour.

"They caught me at Elyan foot,
And horsed me there, hard and
tight;
Without saddle or bridle I rode in the
middle,
With a trooper to left and right.

"Then they had a great drink at
the inn,
Where a lad somewhat loosened my
feet;
The ale had been strong, and with
jest and song
They carelessly rode in the heat.

"The day was muggy and warm,
And their brains were sodden with
drink,
At Ericstane Brae they were no
more gay,
But the wakefulest 'gan to wink.

"There I got my feet free of the rope,
Where the gully is sudden and deep;
It was half-full of mist, as I surely
wist,
And its bank is stony and steep.

"I thought I had gotten my chance,
And slipt from the back of my steed,
Crept under the man to my left, and ran
Right down the rough bank in hot
speed.

"I heard them shout and swear,
For none of them minced their words;
With a sudden bound some leapt to
the ground,
And hurriedly drew their swords.

"But some their carbines fired,
And one of them reached the mark,
Yet I ran on fast, till I got at last
Down into the mist and the dark,

"And reached the Annan, but faint
With loss of blood and strength
From a wound that, I feel, will never
heal,
For my hour is come at length.

"But I could not rest, until
I had brought a warning to you;

So I crawled up the hill, and crept
on still,
Though weary and weak I grew.

"Now haste you, every one, home,
For I think they will soon be here;
And leave me alone by the big
grey stone
Where I've preached to you often
in fear.

"God's will be done; I had hoped
To lead you in prayer this night,
But there's One who will pray for you
night and day
To keep you true to the right.

"I leave you now in His hand,
Who never will leave His own;
Hold fast to the faith, and fear not
death,
But think of the great white Throne.

"Away! every man to his home,
Let your sorrow for me now cease;
Alone with God, on this bit of green
sod,
I shall yield my soul in peace."

That was the last word he spake,
Straightway he fell down dead,
As we heard the beat of the horses'
feet,
And silently scattered and fled.

LADY DIANA

WELL, yes, I was fond of him once
I admit;
He was gallant, and courtly, and
handsome, and big,
Had plenty of means, and was not
without wit,
Till he took to mad ways, and became
a rank Whig.

We were neighbours—my father and he—on the Ken, And our forebears had hunted together, and fought, Had always been staunch friends, and right-hearted men, Who stood by the Church and the King, as they ought.	Now, a girl might well fancy a man such as that, Might deem him a hero, or hold him a saint— A kind of small god, to be just wondered at, And loved with a love which had no earthly taint.
They had backed up the Queen in her quarrel with Knox, Had trampled the Covenant down in the mire, Had followed Montrose o'er the Bens and the rocks, And swore to King Charles, as they did to his sire.	I can scarce now believe I was e'er such a fool, And I dare say my friends would to laughter be moved At the thought that I ever could whimper and pule For a psalm-singing Puritan rogue that I loved.
There was not a strain of the Whig in them all, Their blood was untainted, their hearts were all true ; Horse and rider were ready to answer the call When the King wanted friends and had fighting to do.	But I was in my teens, and I worshipped him then, Though I wished that he were not a Whig, as they said ; For we were of the Old Church that bred saintly men, And oft for its faith, too, our blood had been shed.
But he took to hill-preachers, and sat on the moss When a Peden, Cargill, or a Cameron spoke Of Christ's crown and kingdom and bearing a cross, Though it was plain rebellion they tried to evoke.	Of course, I stood by him, the more they opposed, And the worse they spake of him, the better I thought ; I was not to be crushed, nor my mouth to be closed, But all the day long for his honour I fought.
He was warned by his friends, but he would not take heed, He was fined o'er and o'er, but that troubled him not ; Not a man to be swayed, he, by fear or by greed, He would stand, as he said, by the thing that he thought.	My father was wroth that I stuck so to him, My mother was worse, and kept nagging me still, My brothers looked at me with coun- tenance grim, Till I swore I'd turn Whig too, and take to the hill.

They were at their wits' end, for the
house had no rest ;
I held my own well, though at times
I would gasp,
When my temper grew hot at some
ill-mannered jest,
For I had a sharp tongue, and it stung
like a wasp.

Then they sent me away to a Convent
in France :
It was not a strict one ; the Mother
was gay,
And the Father Confessor was fond
of a dance,
And we learnt to make love, like the
girls in a play.

Our morals were nowise improved, I
allow,
But then our religion was strict and
severe ;
We were taught when to kneel, and
to cross, and to bow,
And we went to Confession six times
in the year.

We counted our beads, and our Aves
we said,
But meanwhile our thoughts were
about the next ball ;
We chaunted our Psalms ere we lay
down in bed
To watch our fine gallants come over
the wall.

What would you ? Young blood will
not always run slow,
Young minds will rebel against dull,
pious looks,
Young fingers will tire making lace-
flowers to grow,
And oh, how we hated the Nun's
dismal looks.

They were wise, then, to send me
away, for ere long
I got rid of heroics about wrong and
right,
And took to the dance and the lute
and the song,
And thoughts that were cheerful, and
ways that were light ;

And came back a woman ; and
woman is not
Like a girl in her teens that goes
mooning about ;
I knew the world now, with its cynical
thought,
And I looked at its facts, and left
sentiment out.

I said to myself : " I have had my
love-fit,
And found it a day-dream, a fast-
fading flower,
A cloud which the sun for a moment
hath lit
With glories, that end in a dull,
drenching shower.

" One must think of position and jewels
and dress,
And comforts and pleasures, in choos-
ing a mate ;
And what can one look for but times
of distress,
If her man is a fool, and will fight
with the State ? "

I knew what it was to be poor, and
to pinch
And scrape just to keep things a-going,
for we,
Though our acres were many, had
hardly an inch
Of land that paid rent from the Ken
to the Cree—

All moorland, the haunt of the whaup
and the grouse
And the falcon and fox—but our
salmon was good—
And we had to keep up a great ark
of a house,
Filled with idle retainers who clam-
oured for food.

He was richer than we, for his farms
were well tilled,
His tenants all thrifty, his rents duly
paid ;
They were psalm-singing rogues, but
yet steady, and skilled
To make of the land all that well
could be made.

But a Whig he must be, with a con-
science forsooth !
Must go to hill-preachings the Law
had forbid,
And must have a room where "The
Witness for Truth,"
Whom the troopers were seeking,
might safely be hid.

It is true that we, too, had a chamber
concealed,
Where the Priest lay, perdu, when
fanatics held sway,
But it's one thing to preach to rude
clowns in a field,
And another for lords at God's altar
to pray.

I gave him my mind when I met him
one day,
And he spake of old times ; but the
old times were dead ;
He was still as he had been, and went
the old way,
But for me I had quite other thoughts
in my head.

I was sorry, of course, but the truth
must be told :
His Kirk was a schism, his faith was
not mine,
And I could not approve of his pur-
pose to hold
The Law in contempt, and the King's
right divine.

So we parted ; on my part, with some-
thing of scorn
For a man who could wantonly ship-
wreck his life
For a cause that was lost, and a Kirk
that was torn
In pieces by jealousy, envy, and
strife.

So the Sheriff, of course, had his duty
to do ;
They must pay for their preaching,
and they found it dear,
When the troopers were quartered
upon them, and slew
Their kine and their sheep, and
ate up half their gear.

They rose in rebellion, but speedily
found
That Claver'se made short work of
them and their pikes ;
I am told they fought well, but were
borne to the ground
By our fellows who rode straight o'er
hedges and dykes.

That's what he brought on himself by
his pride,
And he brought it no less too on most
of his folk,
Who were soon hunted out of the
glens where they hide,
And who lie now securely in fetter
and lock.

'Tis a pity, no doubt, that so many
were killed,
For they were our best farmers and
workers all round ;
When you came on a trim house, and
fields nicely tilled,
You might know that a Whig held a
lease of the ground.

Our fellows are nearly all roystering
loons,
Who take to the ale-cup more than
the plough,
Carousing each night, singing Cavalier
tunes,
Which they shout, till the birds wake
upon the green bough.

The Whigs have their psalms and
their sermons, but then
They are up with the sun for the
tasks they must do ;
They are all canting rogues, but I
wish our brave men
Were as fond of their work, and as
honest and true.

There's a batch of them waiting in
gaol to be sold
To the Colony planters, all healthy
and strong,
And worth a round sum to be paid
there in gold,
Though here they are bargained for
just an old song.

I am told they will bring twenty
guineas a head
Over there, and probably some of
them more,
So I got at the Lady old Lauderdale
wed,
And she gave me a grant of at least
half a score.

Perhaps he is one of them? Be it
so. He
Will be sold anyhow when the ship
comes to port ;
And why should not some of the price
fall to me,
As well as to fine Lords and Ladies
at Court ?

There's Queensferry in for a slice of
his land,
And Lagg will not rest till he shares
with Dundee
What is over, unless Earlshall get his
hand
On the fields which march nicely with
his on the Cree.

They take what they can, as my
father does too,
And I'm poorer than they are, and
needing it more :
My debts at the Tables are more than
I knew,
And duns come and hammer each
day at the door.

This grant will be worth a two
hundred, at least,
And will quiet their angry demands
for a space ;
And perhaps I may spare a small sum
for the Priest,
To absolve from the sin, if sin be in
the case.

But there is not. I liked him, and
so did they all,
But that does not hinder them doing
their most
To get at the wreck, and to profit
withal
When the ship of a fool has gone
down, and been lost.

I am doing quite right, then. And
speaking of that,
Were it right to give up all this money
to pay
Old debts, when I'm needing new
frocks and a hat,
For it shamed me last night to be seen
at the play?

My debts they can wait. I've a good
mind to go
Up to London a while, and look in at
the Mall,
And see the Court beauties and gallants,
although
Where the beauty is found 'tis not
easy to tell.

One must hope our good King has
some politic wits,
But his taste in women astonishes me;
That Churchill might well give his
Majesty fits,
Were it not that the others are worse
even than she.

GRIZEL BAILLIE

It was in "the Killing Times," when
consciences were crimes,
And over all the Merse were scattered
troops of wild dragoons
Swaggering in the streets and squares,
saucy, daring "deil-ma-cares,"
All in bravery of scarlet, and brawny
handsome loons.

For Claver's and Dalzell had trained
the rascals well
For the pillage and the carnage, they
set them now to do;
They haunted all our shores, and spied
about our doors,
Watching keenly for our father, but
we watched them keenly too.

Just then the rage was hot about the
Ryehouse Plot,
Wherein he had no part, for all such
doings he abhorred;
There were ten of us to feed, and his
heart had daily need
Both of courage and of caution, and
he trusted in the Lord,

And never went astray from the
strait and narrow way
Of truth and right and duty, which
his Master trod before;
He was staunch against oppression,
and his heart bled for the nation,
But he waited for salvation, till God
opened wide the door.

But guiltless though he was, they knew
he loved the cause
Of the wronged and ruined people,
and the Kirk he held so dear;
And his innocence had failed, when
such lawlessness prevailed,
To protect the friend of Baillie from
their fury and their fear.

He must take to hiding, then, where
the prying eyes of men
Might not find him, till the trouble
and the terror overpassed;
And the only likely place was a grue-
some one to face
Where he laid his honoured father,
when its door was opened last.

Polwarth tomb beside the Kirk, it is
eerie, cold, and mirk,
With a mere slit in the wall for light
and air to enter in;
And scant the light and air ever came
unto him there,
As he lay repeating Psalms, and pray-
ing to be kept from sin.

I often thank the Lord for His good
and holy Word,
And also George Buchanan for his
craft in Latin verse ;
Father could not have got through
the waste and weary time he knew,
But for humming the old Psalms he
learnt in schooldays to rehearse.

That kept his heart up well, as the
glimmering sunlight fell
On the coffins heaped up grimly against
the clammy wall,
While he breathed the sickly breath of
old decay and death,
For the long line of his ancestry had
there been buried all.

Mother and I alone were aware where
he had gone,
My brothers were too young to be
told a secret yet ;
And each night, when they slept, forth
into the dark I crept
Under the twinkling stars, when the
sun had wholly set.

At meal-times it was good just to
watch our mother's mood
And the fun she made till every one
must turn to her his head,
While I swept into my lap dainty bit
and wholesome scrap,
Which they thought that I had eaten,
and called me "greedy gled."

For the children must not know, nor
the servants, where I go
Or what it was I took with me when
I stole out at night ;
But father must have meat in his
hiding-place to eat,
And when I got my basket filled my
heart was very light.

I had always been afraid in the dark-
ness, when I made
My way along the footpath beside the
kirkyard wall ;
I knew that ghosts were nought, yet
my heart came to my throat,
If a rabbit scurried past me, or I heard
an owlet call.

But now I stumbled on over mound
and grey headstone,
As the dogs barked in the manse, when
they heard my stealthy feet,
And I heeded not the dead, not a ghost
was in my head,
But I only thought how soon he should
have bread enough to eat.

I found him always gay, ready still to
jest and play ;
How he laughed out when I said the
children called me "greedy gled !"
And first I had to tell him if all at
home were well,
And then he thanked the Lord, and
bared and bowed his honoured head.

He was pious, cheerful, wise, and my
happiest memories
Are the hours that I passed with him in
the tomb by Polwarth Kirk ;
Though his wrath would burn and blaze,
as I spake of our evil days
When there was no law in the land,
but the rule of sword and dirk.

We were feeling quite secure that our
secret would endure
Any search they would be like to make
among the kirkyard stones,
Though at times they might have heard,
now and then, a Latin word,
Or even a peal of laughter from the
house of dry old bones.

But it chanced upon a night, when the
 moon was shining bright,
 That the parson in the manse beheld
 me through the kirkyard go ;
 He was but a craven loon, and the
 glamour of the moon
 Made him take me for a phantom that
 was gliding to and fro.

Next day he took to bed, and the
 tidings quickly spread
 Through the parish, that he had been
 driven into fainting fits
 By a vision he had seen, flitting where
 the graves were green,
 And filling him with terror till it
 shattered all his wits.

Some laughed, and others hinted it
 was drink that had demented
 The creature, who was known to be a
 spy upon his flock ;
 There were some, both young and old,
 who were lying then in hold
 On the curate's information to the
 military folk.

But there were some troopers swore
 that they feared a ghost no more
 Than a Whig, and they would watch
 the kirkyard willingly all night ;
 Give them but some cups of wine, and
 they would make wassail fine,
 Though the Devil and all his angels
 came from hell to do them spite.

What could we do to save our loved
 one good and brave,
 Now that in his father's grave he could
 no longer hope to hide ?
 They were reckless and profane, those
 dragoons, and it was plain
 They might keep their watch on nightly,
 till he pined away and died.

I was fain to play the ghost with them,
 and take, at any cost,
 The food that he would need upon a
 cold and wintry night ;
 For wrapt up in a sheet, and coming
 up with silent feet,
 I felt sure that sudden terror would
 seize on them at the sight.

I had no fear at all, for I knew the
 kirkyard wall,
 And could jump it, and take shelter
 where they should not find me then ;
 But though father was so dear, mother
 would not even hear
 Of my running any risks among those
 wild and godless men.

She had thought out in her mind
 another way by which to blind
 The foes if they suspected that he still
 was near at hand,
 And she liked it all the rather that she
 thus could cheer our father
 With the voices of the children, and
 the comforts she had planned.

There was one whom we could trust,
 as clearly now we must,
 And we took him into counsel, and
 began our task straightway :
 In a room on the ground floor there
 was a bed and little more,
 And we hoped to hide him there, until
 he might get safe away.

Then we dug beneath the bed a hole
 to hide his honoured head,
 Scraped the earth out with our fingers,
 till the nails were worn away,
 And bore it in a sheet outside, until we
 did complete
 The work we had in hand before the
 weary close of day.

Mother looked bright and brave, but I
 said 'twas like his grave,
 And the box the man had made for it
 was like his coffin too :
 But with holes in it for air, and a little
 room to spare,
 And a mattress for his comfort, she
 thought that it might do.

The night was dark and wet, and before
 the watch was set,
 I brought him safely home from his
 gruesome hiding-place ;
 And oh but she was glad, who had been
 of late so sad,
 As she fell upon his bosom, and looked
 up into his face.

Then she'd make him a gay feast, and
 his wine should be increased
 From a flask up to a flagon, and they
 two should dine alone,
 As on their wedding day, when he bore
 his bride away,
 A prouder, happier man than the king
 upon his throne.

Meanwhile the rain fell fast, and beneath
 the howling blast
 Doors banged and windows rattled, and
 the old house seemed to rock ;
 But though the night was eerie, their
 hearts were very cheery,
 And they only said the storm was hard
 on poor and homeless folk.

At length she rose to show his hiding-
 place below
 The great bed by the wall, where none
 would surely seek for him ;
 But the box it was afloat, and leaking
 like a boat
 Which had gazed in the sunshine,
 till it scarce was fit to swim.

He smiled at our pet scheme, which
 had proved an idle dream,
 But mother was so vexed, he would not
 tease her with a jest,
 But gently stroked her hair, and bade
 her not despair ;
 That the rain should flood the old house
 no mortal could have guessed.

" Well, to-morrow's Wooler Fair," he
 said, " and we should have horses there
 If we would not lose the market. Let
 the man set forth to-night,
 And let him take the highway, while
 I will take the byway,
 And pick him up, I reckon, before the
 morning light.

" We must run some risk, indeed, but I
 know the fords of Tweed,
 And there is no safety here, now
 suspicion is awake,
 John will ride my good bay horse, and
 use it tenderly of course,
 For none can tell how long a journey
 next day I must take."

We had no time to waste, yet we must
 not seem in haste,
 But as if we went on calmly in our
 ordinary way ;
 So the colts were all got ready by our
 trusty man and steady,
 And father crossed the Border before
 the break of day.

Then we had a while to wait in a
 troubled, restless state,
 Till tidings came from Holland he had
 landed on its coast,
 Having been to Wooler Fair, and sold
 his horses there,
 And got money in his purse to " pay
 the lawing of Mine Host."

THE ROVER OF SALLEE

It's oh, there was never a happier wife
Than I was in all the old kingdom of
Fife;

And never a brighter fireside than ours,
With the bairns around it all blooming
like flowers;

And never a better goodman than mine
Whose home made him blither than
stoups of wine;

And he loved me as if I had still been
a bride,

And the fear of the Lord was at our
fireside.

But now, as the wild wave breaks on
the sea,

Even so is my sad heart breaking in me:
For the woeful news that have come to
hand

From the Barbary shore, and the
Blackamoor's land.

And who will now be my honoured
head?

And who will win for us daily bread?
And who will bring to our hearts good
cheer

The moment his foot at the door we
hear?

It was a rover of Sallee

That drove at his vessel with galleys
three,

Leaping out from the Spanish shores

Under the sweep of a hundred oars.

John fought his ship till her decks
were red,

And fifty Moors lay dying or dead,

And of his twenty gallant men

But two were unwounded, the killed
were ten.

The pirate robbed him of all his gear,

Tortured his body till death came near,

Sank his ship in the deep mid sea,
And bore him a slave to Barbary.
There he is dragging a heavy chain,
As he toils all day in the sun and rain,
And he sleeps in a den among rotten
weeds,
And rats and toads and centipedes.

O love, my love, as I stood that day
On the windy pier when you sailed
away,

And the ship swung cheerily o'er the
bar,

And the sails swelled out on each
bending spar,

Little I dreamt I had seen the last
Of the good old ship and her bending
mast,

Or what sad fate should her crew
befall,

And him that was dearer to me than
all.

It's oh, if I were but Queen of the land,
With ships of war at my free
command,

I would not send them to harry Spain,
Or to fight the Dutch on the low-
land main;

But they should sail to the Barbary
coast,

To battle the Moor where he keeps his
host,

And my goodman should delivered be
From the wicked Rover of Sallee.

What is the use of our great war-ships
If honest sailors, on trading trips,
May be boarded by pirate crews and
slain,

Or bound as slaves with a cruel chain?

Oh that we had again Andrew Wood,

Who for his country so bravely stood;

Or William Scott, who by night and
day

Hunted the rovers from creek and bay!

To ransom my man I have given up
all
The means that I had—but my
means were small ;
And the Kirk is collecting, from rich
and poor,
Money to send to the rascal Moor.
But what we need is the hand of the
strong,
And the sword of might to put
down wrong ;
And oh, that our sorrows and shames
might evoke
A King of some mettle who cared
for his folk.

THE CAMERONIAN REGIMENT

SOUND-HEARTED and true,
All men of good-will,
Healthy and hearty,
And staunch to our party,
Douglasdale sends us to tell you that
still
It can find the right men when there's
right work to do.

Our Colonel's a Lord
Of the old Douglas name :
But next him is Cleland,
And there is not a gallanter,
Gone off now with Claver's, will play
the great game
Better than he will, by word and by
Sword.

He was but a lad
When he fought at Drumclog,
At Bothwell a bullet,
Well aimed for Rathillet,
Glanced off, and hit Cleland who
stood by the Bog,
Cheering the men when the business
looked bad.

Had all been as stout
As he was that day,
As fearless and faithful
Amid all the deathful
Rushes and shocks of the battle array,
There had not been a wail at the end,
but a shout.

Well, the verse he will write
Is a profitless task ;
Yet it soothes his hot spirit,
And so we can bear it ;
But give him a sword in his hand, and
you'd ask
No gallant soldier to order the fight.

He knows us each man,
And we know and trust him,
And will show him our mettle
In the fierce tug of battle,
For it nerves every arm, when the
dust-cloud is dim,
Just to watch his good sword flashing
still on the van.

We're all Cameron's men,
Pledged to Covenant work,
And we'll not do it slackly,
But strict and exactly,
As Cromwell's lads did it at Naseby
and York,—
They were Sectaries, but they did
godly work then.

All our knapsacks contain
The good Book of God's word,
And every blue bonnet,
With the top-knot upon it,
Holds a head that can think and resolve
for the Lord,
And the born rights of Freemen will
stoutly maintain.

For the Kirk and its Cause
We are banded to fight,
Every man of us zealots
Against Popes and Prelates,

Erastians, Arminians, and those birds
of night,
The trafficking mass-priests who scorn
all the laws.

We shall not fight the worse
That we also can pray,
And are not, like the troopers,
Roused from deep, drunken stupors,
With pistol and sabre to smite, and
to slay,
And to trample the saints 'neath the
hoof of the horse.

“For Christ’s Cause and Crown,”
That’s our watchward in fight,
And we mean to deliver
The nation for ever
From the false perjured king, and his
surplices white,
His mass-books, and priests whom we
wholly disown.

Let the Highland Host come,
They’ll be here by and by,
For they may not long tarry
By Tummel and Garry.
Lads, close up your ranks, see your
powder is dry,
And blow up the trumpet, and beat the
big drum.

THE RABBLING OF THE CURATES

YES! they blamed us loudly of course,
The man who oppressed us so long,
That we counted on. But it was worse
When our friends too said we did
wrong,
And had sullied, and tarnished with
crime
The grandest event of the time.

Yet there’s more to be said for our work
Than some of our wiseacres think,
We did not set on, like the Turk,
Inflamed with religion and drink,
To wreak a blind vengeance, and strike
The good and the bad both alike.

It was justice we aimed at. We chose
With care whom we meant to cast out,
And when some would have rough-
handled those
We knew nothing evil about—
For there were some devout curates too—
With them we had nothing to do.

But the priests who were spies on
their flock,
Who sent lists to the soldiers to kill,
Or who dragged to the cord and the
block
Those who liked a discourse on the hill,
Which did them some good, as they
thought,
Them we harried well, sparing them not.

It looked a rough work to be sure;
But we struck at none of their lives,
Only cast out their fine furniture,
And meddled with none of their wives;
We carried off none of their stores,
But left them outside the manse doors.

’Tis like enough some caught a cold,
For the weather was not always good,
And it might be too much for the old,
Yet I never have understood
That any one died outright
Of our rabbling, that gave them a fright.

No blood by our lads, then, was spilt,
We sought not for any one’s life,
But our hearts were wroth at the guilt
Of the man who, when troubles were
rife,
Debased their high office to be
The tools of a vile tyranny.

Would you have us look on, and be calm
When our shepherds, whose duty is
plain,

By preaching, by prayer, and by Psalm,
To bring us to God's way again,
Took to hounding dragoons on the
people

Who preferred the hillside to their
steeple?

In our worship we mostly were slack,
But we all were human at least;
And when friends got the boot or
the rack,

On the hint of some rogue of a priest,
That burnt in our hearts like a fire;
And our scorn and our loathing
were dire.

There were heads on the Netherbow
Port

We had honoured for patriot zeal,
While turncoats and triflers at Court
Were wrecking the common weal;
And the Church, which should shield
the oppressed,
Cared only to feather its nest.

No, I am not ashamed—not a whit—
Of the work that I did in those days.
It had been foul shame just to sit,
And join in the prayer and the praise
Of the wolves in sheeps' clothing,
who then

Had the cure of the souls of poor men.

I grant we had not enough faith
To resist, in the time of their might,
Like those who withstood unto death,
And held by the truth and the right;
We shared in the nation's complaints,
But we were neither heroes nor saints.

What would you? Some men are
so made,
They are not very noble or brave;

Let them quietly work at their trade,
Eat and drink, and go down to the
grave,

And they may be good citizens, though
Not a throb of great Spirits they know.

Yet, when they can safely reveal
The thoughts of their heart, you
may find

That they long had been fain to conceal
The wrath of a well-ordered mind,
As the thunder lies hid in the cloud,
Till it bursts at length angry and loud.

We were mostly young lads from
the plough,

And our wrath was a kind of horse-
play—

A frolic of justice, which now
Looks to me just too mirthful and gay;
It had better befitted the cause
Had our rabbling been worse than
it was.

We gave the bad curates a fright,
And we laughed at their crestfallen
looks

When we roused them from slumber
that night,

And burned their messe-ropes and
messe-books:

But we left them to go their own way,
With their lives and their gear for a prey.

THE SIEGE OF THE BASS

JUST two miles off from the mainland,
Where the Forth is broad and free,
The Bass and its grim rock-fortress
Stands fronting the grey North Sea;
The wild gulls nest on its ledges,
Or over it fly in clouds,
And round it the sea-waves breaking
Turn white for the sailor's shrouds.

Four of Dundee's wild gallants,
 Left in its prison to pine,
 Seized on it, one day the soldiers
 Had gone off for fuel and wine,
 Closed the gate fast on them sternly,
 And threatened to shoot them down;
 They would hold the Fort for
 its Master,
 The king who owned the crown.

A Middleton, a Halyburton,
 With ensigns Roy and Dunbar,
 They were reckless and brave as the
 Leader
 They had followed in peace and war;
 Young Crawford, Ardmillan, and others
 Ere long, too, would share in the fight;
 And sixteen men, at the utmost,
 They bearded a nation's might.

They had ample shot and powder,
 More guns than they well could man,
 And plenty of swords and muskets
 To ply when the fray began;
 And watch and ward they kept strictly,
 As the soldier's custom is,
 For it was the last rag of his kingdom
 King James could still call his.

They had nights of wild adventure
 When they roved in search of prey,
 And nights of deep carousal
 That lasted till break of day.
 Where the Whigs were of late psalm-
 singing,
 And their prayers had been loud
 and long,
 Now the roof was with laughter ringing,
 And ribald jest and song.

They raided the coast of Lothian,
 They plundered the towns of Fife,
 They tithed the Merse to provide them
 With bread to maintain their life.
 But sixteen men in a fortress
 Two miles out at sea,
 What could they hope to accomplish?
 What could their purpose be?

By day they would boast and swagger,
 By night they would rob and steal
 Where they found a cove to shelter,
 Or a shore to beach their keel;
 And they flaunted the king's broad
 banner
 Aloft in the sun and rain,
 And drank to his health, and shouted
 He should soon have his own again.

Wroth were the Lords of Council
 When they met in Parliament,
 And the Lion ship of battle
 To the leaguer straight was sent:
 But she had to lie off helpless
 Till the sailors' hearts were sick,
 For the guns of the Fort were heavy,
 And they would have sunk her
 quick.

The French king heard their story,
 And thereon manned a ship
 Which the Lion feared to tackle,
 And straight away did slip;
 So the French left fresh munitions,
 And store of food and wine,
 That they might maintain the battle,
 And also bravely dine.

Around the Council table
 The nobles gnashed their teeth;
 Their swords hung at their girdles,
 But each glued in its sheath.
 A nation stood behind them
 With all its power and might,
 Yet sixteen men on the Bass Rock
 Held out in their despite.

Where was the ancient courage
 That stood by the gallant Bruce?
 And the large resource and patience
 That sought nor peace nor truce?
 Where were the daring spirits
 That did to Wallace turn?
 And where the skill of battle
 That won at Bannockburn?

Once Scotland had her soldiers
Who could her cause make good—
Her Douglasses and Randolphs,
Her brave Sir Andrew Wood,
Her Lindsays and her Leslies,
And hosts of fighting men ;
But now she has Dalrymples,
And for the sword a pen.

It is craft they use for courage,
And blows dealt in the dark,
As the men of Glencoe can witness,
And no dog dares to bark ;
They follow the ways of Rothes,
And Lauderdale, and those
Who sought but to find their profit
In the nation's wrongs and woes.

We hoped when the Papist monarch
Took shipping across the sea,
That all would be now well ordered,
And the people glad and free.
But their rule is weak and cruel,
And the nation rent and torn ;
And sixteen men on the Bass Rock
Could laugh them all to scorn.

For two long years it lasted,
That siege of the brave sixteen ;
And when at length they yielded,
All hunger-pinched and lean,
They came off with flying colours
In soldierly array,
With sword, and dirk, and pistol,
And a sporran—with their pay !

Now, shame upon the laggards,
With hands so weak and slack,
To be mocked by these rough
troopers,
With a nation at their back !
And to pay the rogues for robbing
The poor folk on the shore,
And send them away, still bragging
They would play the game once more !

DAMIEN AND MARION CUNNINGHAM

It's oh the bonnie Tynron braes
Where the broom grows high and green,
And the ivied wall and the birch-
tree tall,
And the burn that runs between ;
Where, in the dewy gloaming light,
So oft our tryst had been.

The stars came forth to watch us there,
And smile upon our bliss ;
The small birds and the wanton hare,
They shared our joy, I wis ;
There were no other eyes to care
How fondly we might kiss.

My love was lord of Abingdon,
And I was a Glencairn ;
But true love levels all, and none
Its blessedness may learn,
Who will not pass, as lad and lass,
Among the broom and fern.

Still far below the waters flow,
Low-whispering as they move,
And the mavis still, at his sweet will,
Sings high on the tree above—
He sings the same song o'er and o'er,
As we did with our love.

And still the primrose pranks the braes
When spring is in the air,
And still the broom is in a blaze
When young birds flutter there ;
But the scented broom and its golden
bloom
Are heavy with grief and care.

No more theyspeak about love and hope,
As they did so fondly then,
But of a host that pine and drop,
All fainting, famished men,
And a lonely grave by the breaking wave
On the shore of Damien.

LADY GRANGE

O THE villain ! to leave me here
 On this desolate rock far out at sea,
 Among red-shanked Celts, with their
 freckles and warts,
 And gannets and kittiwakes, puffins
 and scarts,
 Which are all that I have for company.

Never a word of their Erse I know,
 I might as well talk to the screaming
 gulls :

And the big waves crash on the rocks
 all day,
 And growl through the night, like
 beasts of prey
 Worrying over rib-bones and skulls.

The poor folk mean to be kind in
 their way ;

But I cannot breathe in their peat-
 smoked rooms,

Nor eat of their oily, ill-cooked food,
 Nor sleep at night, for the vermin brood
 You might sweep from the bed with
 their heather brooms.

O my Lord Grange, I held you once
 For a good man truly, with wit and
 sense :

But I know you now for a rogue in-
 grain,

And how can you ever show face again
 Among men of honour and reverence ?

Four of your gillies, bare-legged loons,
 Broke into my chamber, and bound
 me fast ;

Gagged me, and carried me out of town,
 Hither and thither, and up and down,
 To land me here on this rock at last.

But you dare not keep me always here ;
 I know the MacLeod will set me free,

When he learns, as he shall, that a
 lady born

Lies on his desolate isle, forlorn,
 Moaning her fate to the moaning sea.

What will he think of my Lord of
 Grange,

When the wrongs I have borne shall
 come to light ?

And what will the rest of the Fifteen say
 Of their brother Judge, when they have
 to lay

The Law down about him, and do
 me right ?

I have shielded him long, as a wife
 will do,

But now I will speak out all the truth ;
 He is come of a traitorous, viperous
 tribe,

And is falser and baser than tongue
 can describe,

Though his looks are so fair, and his
 tongue so smooth.

The hypocrite ! think of him reading
 for hours

His Bible at nights, when the lamps
 come in,

While his madame creeps stealthily up
 the back stairs,

And hears him ere long at his evening
 prayers,

Loudly bewailing his load of sin.

And then, too, he must have his
 prophet-maids,

Who reel off their dreams to him by
 the yard

In a dingy back-shop in the Potter-row,
 To freshen his faith when it waxes low,
 And to fool him out of a fine reward.

We Chievellys are said to be rash
 and hot,

Ready enough with a word and a blow,

And their hands, I allow, have with
blood been stained
Of some they have stabbed, and some
they have brained,
But they count not a hypocrite yet
that I know.

But he! he's a hollow pretence all
through,
There is nothing he will not deceive
you about;
He lies to the Kirk in his pious words,
He lies to the King, and the Court,
and the lords,
And he lied to me, till I found him out.

Hear him sentence a witch to be burned,
Ora Borderthief to be hanged for a cow,
What a God-fearing man you would
take him for!
Yet I think that the country would
profit more
If it were his own neck that should
"rax the tow."

And oh, the tasses of usquebagh!
And the gallons of potent wine
he drinks!
And his nasty stories, and filthy jokes,
As he soaks his carcase, and slowly
strokes
His great fat paunch, and leers
and winks!

Was ever a woman so vilely wed?
Was ever a wife abused like me?
Cast forth alone among gulls and seals,
And jabbering Celts, with their lines
and creels,
And the dreary call of the moaning sea?

I cannot get rid of that moaning call;
Go where I may, it follows me still:
It rings in my ears the whole day
long,
And haunts my dreams with its wail-
ing song,
Till I wish there was something near
to kill.

FUGITIVE PIECES

THE ELDER'S DAUGHTER

CAsT her forth in her shame,
She is no daughter of mine;
We had an honest name,
All of our house and line;
And she has brought it to shame.

What are you whispering there,
Parleying with sin at the door?
I have no blessing for her;
She is dead to me evermore;
Dead! would to God that she were!

Dead! and the grass o'er her head!
There is no shame in dying:
They were wholesome tears we shed
Where all her wee sisters are lying;
And the love of them is not dead.

I did not curse her, did I?
I meant not that, O Lord:
We are cursed enough already;
Let her go with never a word:
I have blessed her often already.

You are the mother that bore her,
I do not blame you for weeping;
They had all gone before her,
And she had our hearts a-keeping;
And oh, the love that we bore her!

I thought that she was like you;
I thought that the light in her face
Was your youth and its morning dew,
And the winsome look of grace:
But she was never like you.

Is the night dark and wild?
Dark is the way of sin—
The way of an erring child,
Dark without and within—
And tell me not she was beguiled.

What should beguile her, truly?
Did we not bless them both?
There was gold between them duly,
And we blessed their plighted troth,
Though I never liked him truly.

Let us read a word from the Book;
I think that my eyes grow dim;
She used to sit in the nook
There, by the side of him,
And hand me the holy Book.

I wot not what ails me to-night,
I cannot lay hold on a text.
O Jesus! guide me aright,
For my soul is sore perplexed,
And the Book seems dark as the night.

Ah! the night is stormy and dark,
And dark is the way of sin;
And the stream will be swollen too;
and hark
How the water roars in the Lynn!
There's an ugly ford in the dark.

What did you say? To-night
Might she sleep in her little bed?
Her bed so pure and white!
How often I've thought and said,
They were both so pure and white.

But that was a lie—for she
Was a whited sepulchre ;
Yet oh she was white to me,
And I've buried my heart in her ;
And it's dead wherever she be.

Nay, she never could lay her head
Again in the little white room,
Where all her wee sisters were laid ;
She would see them still in the gloom,
All chaste and pure—but dead.

We will go all together,
She, and you, and I ;
There's the black peat-hag 'mong the
heather

Where we could all of us lie,
And bury our shame together.

Any foul place will do
For a grave to us now in our shame ;
She may lie with me and you,
But she shall not sleep with them,
And the dust of my fathers, too.

Is it sin, you say, I have spoken ?
I know not ; my head feels strange ;
And something in me is broken ;
Lord, is it the coming change ?
Forgive the word I have spoken.

I scarce know what I have said ;
Was I hard on her for her fall ?
That was wrong, but the rest were dead,
And I loved her more than them all—
For she heired all the love of the dead.

One by one as they died,
The love, that was owing to them,
Centred on her at my side ;
And then she brought us to shame,
And broke the crown of my pride.

Lord, pardon mine erring child :
Do we not all of us err ?
Dark was my heart and wild ;

Oh might I but look on her
Once more, my lost loved child !

For I thought, not long ago,
That I was in Abraham's bosom ;
And she lifted a face of woe,
Like some pale, withered blossom,
Out of the depths below.

Do not say, when I am gone,
That she has brought my grey hairs
to the grave ;
Women do that ; but let her alone,
She'll have sorrow enough to brave,
That would turn her heart into stone.

Is that her hand in mine ?
Now, give me thine, sweet wife :
I thank Thee, Lord, for this grace
of Thine,
And light, and peace, and life ;
And she is Thine and mine.

THE MYSTERY

“Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.”—Prov. xviii. 1.

O THE haunted house on the moorland,
how lone and desolate,
In its antique fashions grand, it seems
to frown upon its fate !
Looking over the bleak moorland,
looking over to the sea,
Defiant in the haughtiness of some
great memory.

Few trees are there and stunted, for
the salt-wind blows across,
And swathes their twigs in lichens grey,
and flakes of ragged moss ;
And the cotton-grass nods in the fish-
pond beside the spotted rush,
And the newt creeps thro' their sodden
roots where they grow rank and lush.

But moor and marsh and stunted tree,
 with mosses overrun,
 And the Druid stone where the raven
 sits blinking in the sun—
 All are bleaker from its neighbourhood,
 and grouped around it lie,
 As round a desolate thought that fills
 a subtle painter's eye.

Straggling over half an acre, with a
 rough-hewn masonry,
 There are portals heavy-arched, and
 gables crested with the fleur-de-lis,
 Mounted turrets, curious windows, and
 armorial bearings quaint,
 Full of rare fantastic meanings as the
 dreams of some old saint.

And the grim old tower looms darkly
 with its shadow over all ;
 Beast unclean and bird unholy brood
 or burrow in its wall ;
 Moans the wind thro' long blind lobbies
 —distant doors are heard to slap,
 And the paint falls from the panels, and
 the mouldering tapestries flap.

Falls the paint from scripture stories, all
 blurred with mildew damp,
 Fade the ancient knights and ladies from
 the tapestries quaint and cramp ;
 And of all the rare carved mantels only
 here and there are seen
 A bunch of flowers and vine leaves,
 with a satyr's face between.

Through chinks the sun is breaking, the
 rain breaks through the roof ;
 There are sullen pools in the corners,
 and sullen drops aloof ;
 And flitting as in woodlands, strange
 lights are in the rooms,
 And to and fro they glimmer, alter-
 nating with glooms.

And him that shelters there a-night
 from the wild storm or rain,
 Will death or madness set upon, and
 leaguer him amain
 With eldritch shapes, and eerie sounds
 of sorrow and of sin,
 And cries of utter wailing that make
 the blood grow thin.

O the haunted house on the moorland,
 how lone and desolate,
 In its antique fashions grand, it seems
 to frown upon its fate !
 But sit not thou in its tapestried rooms
 about the midnight drear,
 When the chains clank on the staircase,
 and the groaning step draws near.

The chains clank on the staircase, and
 the step is coming slow,
 And the doors creak on their hinges,
 and the lamp is burning low,
 And thou listenest too intently, and thy
 heart is throbbing fast ;—
 Be thou coward now or bold, 'twere
 better face the stormy blast.

Better face the storm without, you
 think ? Alas ! I cannot tell :
 Perhaps we lose the power, perhaps
 we lose the wish as well ;
 For I have watched and pondered many
 a weary night and day,
 Ever listening thus intently in our
 mystic house of clay ;

Ever listening to its strangeness, to its
 sorrow and its sin,
 With a boldness and a terror, and a
 throbbing heart within ;
 Bold to know the very thing which I
 feared indeed to see,
 Would the lamp but only hold till I
 searched the mystery.

For is not this our human life even such
 a wreck of greatness,
 Where the trace of an ancient grandeur
 marks an equal desolateness?
 Since that which hath been is not, or
 only serves to wake
 A thirst for truth and beauty, which,
 alas! it cannot slake.

And the ruin of its greatness casts all
 round an air of gloom;
 Earth's loveliness is darkened by the
 shadow of our doom;
 And the richness of our nature only
 adds a bitter point
 Of irony to the thought that all is
 plainly out of joint.

And fitfully, as through a chink, the
 higher world of God
 Breaks in to make more visible our
 waste and drear abode;
 And syllables and whispers, all dis-
 cordant to rehearse,
 Hint unutterable harmonies in the
 great Universe.

And there are pictured tapestries in
 chambers of the brain,
 The memories of a higher state which
 still with us remain,
 But faded all and mildewed they but
 deepen our regret,
 Like twilight glories telling of a glory
 that is set.

And mingling with the traces of a
 wondrous beauty still,
 There are lustful satyr faces turning all
 the good to ill;
 And like birds unholy nestling and
 defiling every part,
 Oh, the broods of evil passions in the
 corners of the heart.

And if thou watch there thoughtful, in
 silence of the night,
 With a longing and a listening too
 intent to know the right;
 Have a care, for there are phantoms—
 be thou cowardly or bold,—
 That syllable and whisper what shall
 make the blood run cold.

Oh to rid me of that longing! to stand
 aloof and free
 From the dread, or from the power of
 the dread Infinity!
 Oh to grasp, or to be careless of, the
 subtle thoughts that fly
 And shun the sense, like flower-smells,
 the closer we come nigh!

Just to dwell among the little things of
 life, and be content
 With its ordinary being and its ordin-
 ary bent;
 Still to wade in the clear shallows and
 the old accustomed fords,
 'Mong the thin and easy truths and
 the babbling of old words!

To think and feel, and comprehend all
 I might think and feel,
 With a heart that never sickened, and
 a brain that did not reel
 Under the sense of mystery and mighty
 shadows, cast
 Upon the soul from life and death—
 the future and the past.

So thou'rt crushed beneath a shadow!
 —Ah! I would that I could smile
 With your satisfied philosophy; but on
 my heart the while
 The shadow of the Infinite is laid
 oppressively,
 And though I know that it is light,
 alas! it darkens me.

In the lonesomeness and thoughtfulness
of the still midnight hour,
Hast thou never felt the mystery of
being, and its power?—
The great light from the Godhead, and
the cross-light from man,
From that which is and ought to be—
the portion and the plan?

How they are twined and parted, yet
firmly linkèd still
By necessity of being in the dread
Almighty will!
Hast thou never yearned to see the sun
break thro' this gathered haze,
Though he quenched thy little hearth-
fire by the glory of his blaze?

Never felt the eager longing in the
inner heart of men,
Like a tiger pacing restless to and fro
his narrow den,
For his mighty limbs grow irksome
with the lack of room to play,
And he pineth for a leap—a bound into
the night or day?

Ah, me! to be a botanist or book-
worm! just to task
A herbal or a history to answer all
I'd ask;
And be content to live, and work, and
die, and rot—nor ever
Writhe with a mighty longing and a
sense of high endeavour.

Why are all things yet a question?
What is nature? What is man?
What is truth? and what is duty?
Why, answer as we can,
Has the soul a deeper question still to
put, when all is done,
Which goes echoing into darkness, and
answer there is none?

Oh, I've heard that echo often dies in
mockery away
In the distance of conception, like the
waters of a bay
Surging far into a lone sea cave—you
cannot tell how far—
And there is neither light of torch, nor
light of moon or star.

Can I will, and can I be, and do, all I
have thought and felt?
Can I mould mine opportunity, and
shake off sin and guilt?
Is life so thin-transparent, as men have
thought and said?
And God a mere onlooker to see the
game well played?

'Twixt the willing and the being—
'twixt the darkness and the light,
Is there no interval for Him to exercise
His might?
Then perish all my hesitance, and all
your power and pelf;—
I will be loyal to the truth, and royal
to myself.

I will call out from the depths a bound-
less truth—a certain key
To unlock the ancient secrets of our
hoar perplexity;
For the glow of one vast certainty
would banish chaos-night,
And canopy my soul as with a dome
of rainbow light.

O the sounding waves should speak to
me, and be well understood;
The violet should tell the secret of its
pensive mood;
And the dew-drops why their tears are
formed on the eyelash of the light,
And that lorn wind in the woodland
why it sobs the livelong night.

For the whole creation groaneth with
a sorrow not its own,
And to all its many voices grief is still
the undertone,
And on all its sunny aspects lies a
shadow I would fain
Lift, and know with what a birth it is
travailing in pain.

I would speak with the wild Arab deep-
throat guttural truth, and sound
The heart-depths of ascetic, squatting
loathsome on the ground :
Taste all truths of past or present, and
all truths of clime and race,
Where'er a true Divinity was deemed
to have a place.

I would know all creeds and gospels,
and how they played their part,
Each with its place appointed for this
changeable human heart :
Each with a dawn of progress, and a
share of good and ill,
Each with its work appointed by the
Eternal will.

But tossing on the ocean of a change-
able belief,
To deem there is no certainty and hope
for no relief,
With no faith in the old causeways and
the lamplights, it is dreary
To be wandering as I wander now, so
aimless, dark, and weary.

Woe's me ! but life is rigid—is not
plastic to my will ;
Thoughts they come and go, like spirits
with the mist about them still ;
And the strife is ineffectual towards
lighting up the soul,
Like the faint and glimmering twilights
that creep around the pole.

To myself I am all mystery : I fain
would act my part ;
But the problem of existence aches
unsolved within my heart.
How can this life be possible ?—What
matter now to ask ?
'Tis already a necessity—an urgent,
hourly task.

Ah ! there the clouds break up ; and
lo ! a clear bright star uprearing,
Its face deep, deep in heaven, beside
the crystal throne appearing :
Though life be dreary, and truth be
dark ; yet duty is not so :
Lay thy hand then to its labour, and
thy heart into the blow.

Like the light of a dark lantern is the
guiding light for thee,
A circle on the earth just where thy
foot should planted be :
But turn it to the mountains that encom-
pass life and doom,
And it flickers like a shadow, and only
shows the gloom.

O the haunted house on the moorland,
all lone and desolate,
Let it stand in its antique fashions
frowning grimly on its fate ;
But brood not thou with thought intense
about the dark midnight,
But turn thee to thy task, and do thy
work with all thy might.

The day is short and changeable, the
night is drawing on,
And maybe there is light beyond, and
maybe there is none ;
But the grief and pain and struggle, and
the hoar perplexity,
Will not yield their secrets up to any
questioning of thee.

THE REVELATION

He was wont to creep and stumble,
 with a slow uncertain pace,
 And a supplicating doubt o'er all his
 hard, unbending face ;
 And our mirth would make him scorn-
 ful, and our pity made him wince,
 When the fitful moody dream was
 on, perverting the good sense.

He was sharp, too, with his reasons,
 and his deep, invet'rate sneer
 Mocked the highest and divinest
 without reverence or fear ;
 And our pious saws and customs, he
 would laugh at them, and call
 The old lace that did embroider the
 hypocrisy of all.

For the world seemed out of joint
 to him, and rotten to the core,
 With Gods and creeds, once credited,
 but credible no more,
 And duties high, heroic, that once
 were bravely done ;
 But for action, we had babbling only
 now beneath the sun.

And there was nothing sacred in the
 universe to him—
 No lights of awe and wonder—no
 temple fitly dim ;
 Ever scornfully he reasoned, ever
 battled with his lot,
 And he rent, not understanding, the
 fine sanctities of thought.

But the blind old man is altered to a
 cheerful hopefulness,
 And now serenest thought and joy are
 mantling in his face ;
 At one with his own spirit, at one
 with all his kind,
 At one with God's great universe—
 he sees though he is blind.

And it's all that sweet child's doing ;
 see them at the lattice there,
 How his fingers steal amid the long
 brown clusters of her hair ;
 And she looks up with her thoughtful
 eyes of lustrous, loving blue,
 And tells him of the rosebuds that
 are peeping into view.

They say he found her one night,
 humming o'er a quiet tune,
 As he walked, in mournful sadness,
 beneath the tranquil moon ;
 Yet sporting in his sorrow, mourning
 with a scornful mirth,
 Like a blind old Samson grappling
 with the pillars of the earth.

And she came upon him gently, as an
 angel from the Lord,
 And she led him with a loving hand,
 and with a pious word ;
 And she fringed the dark clouds of
 his soul with lights of heaven's own
 grace,
 And she breathed into his life a breath
 of tranquil hopefulness.

And he's no more sharp with reasons ;
 thought sits calmly on his brow,
 And the dew upon his thoughts is
 not changed to hoar-frost now ;
 And he plays such rare sweet music
 with a natural pathos low ;
 There is no sorrow in it, yet 'twill
 make your tears to flow.

For he's full of all bird-singing, and
 the cheery ring of bells,
 The rain that drizzles on the leaves,
 the dripping sound of wells,
 And the bearded barley's rustling,
 and the sound of winds and brooks,
 That in the quiet evening floats
 about the woodland nooks ;

And the old ocean-murmurs, and all
the hum of bees,
And varied modulations of the many-
sounding trees,
These tune his heart to melodies,
that lighten all its load ;
Yet their gladness hath a sadness,
though it speak to him of God.

And he knows all shapes of flowers :
the heath, the fox-glove with its bells,
The palmy ferns' green elegance,
fanned in soft woodland smells ;
The milkwort on the mossy turf his
nice-touch fingers trace,
And the eye-bright, though he sees
it not, he finds it in its place.

And it's all that sweet child's doing,
as they saunter by the brook,
If they be not singing by the way,
she reads the blessed Book ;
Reads the story of the sorrow of the
Man that loved us all,
Till the eyes that cannot see her let
the tears in gladness fall.

Oh, a blessed work is thine, fair child ;
and even so we find
When we, bedridden with sick
thoughts, are wandering in our mind
From the simple truth of nature, how
blissful is the calm.
When Faith holds up the aching head,
and presses with her palm.

That's the keynote of existence ; the
right tone is caught at length ;
Cometh Faith upon the soul, and we
go on in love and strength ;
We go on with surest footstep, by
the dizziest brinks of thought,
And in its deep abysses see the God
whom we had sought.

We were sometime dark and dreary,
we were sometime wroth and
proud,
Warring with our fate defiant, scorn-
ful of the vacant crowd,
Thoughtful of the seeming discords,
and the impotence of will,
And questioning the universe for
meanings hard and ill.

Cometh Faith upon the spirit, and the
spirit is serene,
Seeing beauty in the duty, and God
where these are seen—
God in every path of duty, beaming
gracious from above,
And clothing every sorrow with the
garment of His love.

And the dark cloud is uplifted, and
the mists of doubt grow thin,
Leaving drops of dew behind them, as
the light comes breaking in ;
And the surges of the passion into
quiet slumbers fall,
And the discords do but hint a grander
harmony through all.

For around the Man of Sorrows all the
sorrows of our lot
Find their law and light in Him, whose
life is our divinest thought ;
And the Infinite, the Dreaded, draws
nigh to thee and me
In the sacrament of sorrow—we are
blind and yet we see.

For if the way of man here is a way
of grief and loss,
Even so the way of Godhead was
upon the bitter cross,—
Upon the bitter cross, and along a
tearful story,
Till the wreath of thorns became the
crown of heaven's imperial glory.

So the sorrow and the sacrifice,
 whereat we do repine,
 Are but symbols of the kinship 'twixt
 the human and divine—
 But the law of highest Being and of
 highest honour given;
 For the wreath of cruel thorns is now
 the empire crown of heaven.

Rest thee on that faith divine, and all
 the history of man
 Round its thread will crystallise in
 order of a glorious plan;
 For the grief is still divinest, and our
 strains of deepest gladness
 Show their kindred by their trembling
 ever on the verge of sadness.

Rest thee on that holy faith, and all
 the misty mountain tops,
 Where thy thoughts were cold and
 cloudy, shall beam forth with
 radiant hopes;
 And the harmony of all things, never
 uttered into ears,
 Shall be felt in deep heart-heavings,
 like the music of the spheres.

'Tis the shallow stream that babbles—
 'tis in shallows of the sea
 Where its ineffectual labours for a
 mighty utterance be;
 All the spoken truth is ripple—surge
 upon the shore of Death;
 There is but a silent swell amid the
 depths of love and faith.

But be still, and hear the Godhead,
 how His solemn footsteps fall
 In the story of the sorrow of the Man
 who loved us all;
 Be still, and let Him lead thee along
 the brink of awe,
 Where the mystery of sorrow solves
 the mystery of Law.

And the mournfulness and scornful-
 ness will haply melt away,
 They were frost-work on your
 windows, and they dimm'd the
 light of day;
 And you took their phantom pictures
 for the scenery of earth,
 And never saw in truth the world that
 made your mournful mirth.

Only let the Heaven-child, Jesus, lead
 thee meekly on the path,
 Through thy troubles, strewn with
 blossoms of a kindly aftermath;
 And for reasons sharp and bitter, quiet
 thoughts will rise in thee,
 As when light, instead of lightning,
 gleams upon the earth and sea.

And the world will murmur sweetly
 many songs into thine ear,
 From the harvest and the vintage, as
 their gladness crowns the year;
 From the laughter of the children,
 glancing lightsome as life's foam;
 From the Sabbath of the weary, and
 the sanctities of home.

Yea, the sickness and the sorrows, and
 the mourner's bitter grief
 Will have strains of holy meaning,
 notes of infinite relief,
 Whispering of the love and wisdom
 that are in a Father's rod;
 And their sadness will have gladness
 speaking thus to thee of God.

And if He give thee waters of sorrow
 to thy fate,
 He will give them songs to murmur,
 though but half articulate,
 Like the brooks that murmur pensive,
 and you not know what they say,
 But the grass and flowers are brightest
 where they sing along their way.

Thus in thoughtful contemplation of
the full-orbed life divine,
Shall the fragmentary reason find the
Law that doth combine
All the seeming antinomies of the
Infinite decree
That has linked the highest Being
with the highest misery.

Ye that dwell among your reasons,
what is that ye call a God,
But the lengthening shadow of your-
selves that falls upon your road ;
The shadow of a Self supreme, that
orders all our fate,
Sitting bland in contemplation of
the ruins desolate ?

Oh, your subtle logic-bridges, spanning
over the abyss
From the finite, with its sadness, to the
Infinite of bliss !
You would find out God by logic,
lying far from us, serene,
In a weighty proposition, with a
hundred links between !

And you send your thoughts on every
side in search of Him forsooth !
Speeding over the broad universe to
find the only truth
That lies at your hand for ever. Get
thee eye-salve, man, and pray :
God is walking in the garden, and it
is the noon of day.

Roll up these grave-clothes, lay them
in a corner of the tomb ;
He is risen from dead arguments ;
what seek ye in their gloom ?
Leave the linen robes and spices—
foolish hearts are thine and mine,
How could love and faith be called
upon to bury the divine ?

Oh, not this the way of Faith, not this
the way of holy Love,
Where the Christ of human story, and
the Christ of heaven above,
Blends the duty and the beauty—
blends the human and divine,
By His crown of many sorrows
ever glorifying thine.

Tell me no more of your reasons ; do
not call me to embark
On a voyage to the tropics with an
iceberg for an ark,
Swaying grandly o'er the billows,
shining brightly in the sun,
But to melt away beneath me ere the
voyage be half done.

I heed not of your logic ; I am well
convinced of God :
'Tis the purpose He is working, and
the path that He has trod
Through the mystery of misery—the
labyrinth of sin,
That clouds the world around, and
overcasts the soul within.

And you've not discovered God—and
I care not though you did—
That is not the ancient secret from
the generations hid ;
'Tis the purpose, and the moral, and
the harmony of life,
That we ravel in unravelling till ex-
hausted with the strife.

And my heart was all despairing, and
my soul was dark and dreary,
And the night was coming fast on me
—a lonesome night and eerie—
As bit by bit the wreck went down,
and all I clung to most,
Turned to straws and drifting bubbles,
and was in the darkness lost.

And my heart grew more despairing,
 and my soul more dark and dreary,
 Till I saw the Godhead bending,
 faint and meek, and very weary ;
 Not in blessedness supernal, sitting
 easy on a throne,
 Dealing sorrows unto others, with no
 sorrow of His own.

And I read in His great sorrows the
 significance of mine,—
 Even the Law of highest Being,
 proving kin with the divine ;
 Love travelling in pain with a birth
 of nobleness,
 And dying into Life with sure de-
 velopment of bliss.

Then the discords lost their terror,
 and the harmonies began
 To be heard in sweetest snatches,
 where a peaceful spirit ran
 Through strangest variations of the
 universal pain,
 With the still recurring cadence of the
 cross for its refrain.

Snatches of the concord, never fully
 uttered unto man,
 Yet discovering in their pathos, the
 dim outline of the plan,
 Whereby the pain and sorrow, and
 the evil might be wrought,
 Into the rarest beauty, and highest
 unisons of thought.

Heed not, then, the many reasons—
 the cross-lights and the broken,
 That are glimmering all around thee
 with half-meanings but half-spoken ;
 Turn thee to the Man of Sorrows—
 ECCE HOMO !—look on God ;
 He will ease thee of thy sorrows,
 opening blossoms in the rod.

All the creeds are but an effort feebly
 to interpret Him,
 Like the sunlight—through a prism
 that breaks into a chamber dim ;
 Hie thee forth into the daylight,
 wherefore darken thus thy room,
 And then moan that there is only
 light enough to show the gloom ?

ECCE HOMO ! all ye nations,
 tribes, and peoples of the earth,
 Leave the priests their poor devices,
 and the scribes their barren dearth ;
 Here is flesh and blood and feeling—
 thou shalt eat of Him and live,
 And walk with Him in glory whom
 the heavens did once receive.

And your path shall be a path of light,
 your tears a morning shower ;
 All the germs of nature opening
 fragrant, underneath the power
 Of the quiet light that claspeth all
 the world in its embrace,
 And makes it beam and prattle up into
 the Father's face.

